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OF

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THE

HISTORY

OF

CHRISTIANITY,

FROM

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

TO

THE ABOLITION OF PAGANISM

IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

BY

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CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIANITY UNDER THE SONS OF CONSTANTINE.

	Page
Accession of the Sons of Constantine	1
Religious Differences of the two surviving Sons	2
Moral more slow than Religious Revolution	4
Athanasius	7
Restoration of Athanasius to Alexandria (A. D. 338)	9
Council at Antioch (A. D. 341.)	9
Athanasius flies to Rome	11
Usurpation of Gregory	11
Bloody Quarrel at Constantinople	12
Effects of the Trinitarian Controversy in the West	13
Athanasius at Rome	14
Julius, Bishop of Rome	14
Synod at Rome — at Milan (A. D. 343.)	15
Council of Sardica (A. D. 345, 346.)	15
Rival Council at Philippopolis	16
Reconciliation of Constantius with Athanasius (A. D. 349.)	16
Persian War	18
Death of Constans	18
War with Magnentius (A. D. 351.)	18
Battle of Mursa	19
Paul deposed from the Bishopric of Constantinople — Macedonius re-instated	20
Councils of Arles and Milan	20
Persecution of Liberius, Bishop of Rome	20

Page
New Charges against Athanasius - - - 21
Council of Milan - - - - - 22
Fall of Liberius - - - - - - 24
of Hosius - - - - - 25
Reception of Constantius at Rome - - - 25
Orders to remove Athanasius - - - 26
Tumult in the Church of Alexandria - - 27
George of Cappadocia - - - - 28
Escape and Retreat of Athanasius - - - 30
Hilary of Poitiers - - - - 32
Lucifer of Cagliari - - - - - 32
Mutual Accusations of Cruelty - - - - 35
Athanasius as a Writer - - - - 38
Necessity of Creeds during the succeeding Centuries - 40
Influence of the Athanasian Controversy on the Growth of
the Papal Power - - - - 40
Superiority of Arianism - - - - 42
Heresy of Aetius - - - - 43
of Macedonius - - - - 44
Council of Rimini - - - - - 45

CHAPTER VI.

JULIAN.

Short Reign of Julian (A. D. 361—363.) - - 50
His Character - - - - - 51
His Religion - - - - - 53
Unfavourable State of Christianity - - - 54
Julian's Education - - - - 50
Intercourse with the Philosophers - - 58
Conduct of Constantius towards him - - - 60
Julian at Athens - - - - - 62
initiated at Eleusis - - - - 63
Julian's Elevation to the rank of Cæsar - - 64
Death of Constantius - - - - 64
Conduct of Julian - - - - - 65
Restoration of Paganism - - - - 68

Page
Julian's new Priesthood - - - - 72
charitable Institutions imitated from Christianity - 73
Ritual - - - - - 74
Respect for Temples - - - - 74
Plan of Religious Instruction - - 75
animal Sacrifices - - - 75
Philosophers - - - - - - 77
Maximus - - - - - - 78
Julian's Toleration - - - - - 80
sarcastic Tone - - - - - 81
Taunts of the Christians' Professions of Poverty - 82
Withdrawal of their Privileges - - - 82
Exclusion of them from public Education - - 82
Education of the higher Classes - - - 83
Arts of Julian to undermine Christianity - - 86
Persecutions - - - - - 86
Restoration of Temples - - - - 88
Julian contends on ill-chosen Ground - - - 88
Constantinople — Antioch - - - - 89
Julian at Antioch - - - - - 90
Temple on Mount Casius. — Grove of Daphne - 91
Remains of Babylas - - - - 92
Fire in the new-built Temple - - - 93
Alexandria - - - - - 93
George, the Arian Bishop - - - - 94
His Death - - - - - 95
Athanasius - - - - - - 96
Death of Mark of Arethusa - - - 98
Julian courts the Jews - - - - 98
determines to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem - 99
Writings of Julian - - - - 102
His Work against Christianity - - - 103
The "Misopogon" - - - - 104
Julian sets forth on his Persian Expedition - - 105
Death of Julian - - - - - 105
Probable Results of his Conflict with Christianity - 107

CHAPTER VII.

VALENTINIAN AND VALENS.

	Page
Lamentations of the Pagans at the Death of Julian	109
Reign of Jovian	110
Valentinian and Valens	110
Toleration of Valentinian (A. D. 364.)	111
Laws of Valentinian	112
Prosecutions for Magic	112
Cruelty of Valentinian	114
Trials in Rome before Maximin	115
Connection of these crimes with Paganism	117
Rebellion of Procopius in the East (A. D. 365.)	119
State of Christianity in the East	124
Interview of Valens with Basil	125
Effects of Christianity in mitigating the Evils of Barbarism	127
Influence of the Clergy	129
Their Importance in the new State of Things	130
Influence of Christianity on Literature	131
on Language	132
on the Municipal Institutions	132
on general Habits	134
Early Christianity among the Goths	135
Ulphilas's Version of the Scriptures	136
Arianism of the Goths	138

CHAPTER VIII.

THEODOSIUS. — ABOLITION OF PAGANISM.

Hostility of Theodosius to Paganism	143
Alienation of the Revenue of the Temples	147
Oration of Libanius	148
Syrian Temples destroyed	148
Temple of Serapis, at Alexandria	150
Worship of Serapis	151

Page
Statue of Serapis - 152
The first Attacks on Paganism - 153
Olympus, the Philosopher - 154
War in the City - 154
Flight of Olympus - 155
Rescript of Theodosius - 155
The Temple assailed - 156
The Statue - 157
Paganism at Rome - 162
Gratian Emperor (A. D. 367.) - 165
refuses the Pontificate - 165
Statue of Victory - 166
Apology of Symmachus - 169
Reply of Ambrose - 171
Murder of Valentinian (A. D. 392.) - 173
Accession of Eugenius - 173
Law of Honorius - 179
Capture of Rome by Alaric - 181

CHAPTER IX.

THEODOSIUS. — TRIUMPH OF TRINITARIANISM. — THE GREAT PRELATES OF THE EAST.

Orthodoxy of Theodosius - 185
Laws against Heretics (A. D. 380.) - 185
All the more powerful ecclesiastical Writers favourable to Trinitarianism - 186
Theophilus of Alexandria, Bishop (A. D. 385—412.) - 188
St. Ephrem, the Syrian - 190
Cappadocia - 193
St. Basil - 194
Gregory of Nazianzum - 196
His Poems - 197
Characteristic Difference between Greek and Christian Poetry - 197
Value of Gregory's Poems - 198
Gregory, Bishop of Sasima (A. D. 372.) - 199

Page

Gregory, Bishop of Constantinople (A. D. 339—379.) - 200
Chrysostom - 205
his Life - 206
Riots in Antioch - 211
Intercession of Flavianus for the Rioters - 213
Sentence of Theodosius - 214
Issue of the interview of Flavianus with the Emperor - 216
Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople (A. D. 398.) - 217
Difference of the Sacerdotal Power in Rome and Constantinople - 218
Political Difficulties of Chrysostom - 220
Interference of the Clergy in secular Affairs - 220
Eutropius the Eunuch - 222
Right of Asylum - 222
Chrysostom saves the Life of Eutropius - 224
is governed by his Deacon Serapion - 225
Theophilus of Alexandria - 227
Council of the Oak - 228
Condemnation of Chrysostom - 230
He leaves Constantinople - 231
Earthquake - 231
Return of Chrysostom - 232
Statue of the Empress - 234
Second Condemnation of Chrysostom - 234
Tumults in the Church (A. D. 404.) - 235
Chrysostom surrenders - 236
His Seclusion and Death - 237
His Remains transported to Constantinople - 238

CHAPTER X.

THE GREAT PRELATES OF THE WEST.

Ambrose, Archbishop of Milan - 241
his Youth - 242
is made Bishop (A. D. 374.) - 243
an Advocate of Celibacy - 244
his Redemption of Captives - 245

Page
Ambrose disputes with the Empress Justina - 247
compels the Emperor to yield - 249
his second Embassy to the Usurper Maximus - 254
Accession of Theodosius (A. D. 338.) - 255
Jewish Synagogue destroyed - 256
Conduct of Ambrose - 256
Massacre of Thessalonica (A. D. 390.) - 258
First Capital Punishment for Religion (A. D. 385.) - 260
Priscillian and his Followers - 261
Martin of Tours - 261
Death of Valentinian (A. D. 392.) - 262
of Theodosius (A. D. 395.) - 262
of Ambrose (A. D. 397.) - 262
Augustine - 263
Augustinian Theology - 264
Augustine's Baptism (A. D. 387.) - 276
controversial Writings - 276
"City of God" - 277
Life and Character - 282

CHAPTER XI.

JEROME. — THE MONASTIC SYSTEM.

Monachism - 289
Cœnobitism - 290
Origin of Monachism - 291
Celibacy - 292
Causes which tended to promote Monachism - 294
Antony - 297
Self-torture - 301
Influence of Antony - 303
Cœnobitic Establishments - 305
Dangers of Cœnobitism - 307
Bigotry - 307
Fanaticism - 308
Ignorance - 309
General Effects of Monachism on Christianity - 311
on Political Affairs - 312

Page
Some of its Advantages - 314
Effect on the Maintenance of Christianity - 316
Influence on the Clergy - 319
in promoting Celibacy - 320
Life of Jerome - 323
Trials in his Retreat - 324
His Return to Rome - 326
Morality of the Roman Clergy - 327
Jerome's Influence over the Females - 328
Character of Roman Females - 329
Paula - 330
Controversies of Jerome - 331
Retreat to Palestine - 332
Jovinian and Vigilantius - 332

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE UNDER CHRISTIANITY.

General Survey of the Change effected by Christianity - 341
Sources of Information - 342
Theodosian Code - 342
Christian Writers - 342
Slavery - 343
Manners of the Court - 345
Government of Eunuchs - 345
The Emperor - 346
The Aristocracy - 348
Their Manners - 349
The Females - 350
Gradual Development of the Hierarchical Power - 353
Expulsion or Excommunication - 358

Page
Increase of Priestly Civil Influence - - - 359
The Bishop in the early Community - - - 360
Dissensions in the Church Cause of Increase of Sacerdotal Power - - - - - - 360
Language of the Old Testament - - - 363
Clergy and Laity - - - - 363
Change in the Mode of electing the Priesthood - - 366
Metropolitan Bishops - - - - 367
Formation of the Diocese - - - 367
Chorepiscopi - - - - - 368
Archbishops and Patriarchs - - - 369
Church of Rome - - - - - 370
New sacred Offices - - - - 372
Unity of the Church - - - - 373
General Councils - - - - - 373
Increase in Pomp - - - - - 375
Wealth of the Clergy - - - - 378
Uses to which it was applied - - - - 378
Law of Constantine empowering the Church to receive Bequests - - - - - - 380
Restrictive Edict of Valentinian - - - 380
Pope Damasus - - - - - 380
Application of Church Wealth - - - 382
Celibacy of the Clergy - - - - 383
Married Bishops and Clergy - - - 388
Moral Consequences of Celibacy - - - 389
Mulieres subintroductæ - - - - 389
Union of Church and State - - - - 391
The State under Ecclesiastical Discipline - - 396
Divorce - - - - - 398
Wills - - - - - - 400
Penitential Discipline - - - - 401
Excommunication - - - - 404
Synesius - - - - - - 405
Ecclesiastical Censures chiefly confined to Heresy - 408
executed by the State - 408
Civil Punishment for Ecclesiastical Offences - - 409
Objects of the great Defenders of the Hierarchical Power 411
Dignity and Advantages of the Clerical Station - - 413
General Influence of the Clergy - - - 414

CHAPTER II.

PUBLIC SPECTACLES.

	Page
Religious Ceremonial	418
Divisions of the Church	420
The Porch. — The Penitents	421
The Narthex	422
The Preacher	423
Secrecy of the Sacraments	425
Baptism	427
Eucharist	428
Christian Funerals	431
Worship of the Martyrs	433
Festivals	435
Profane Spectacles	441
Heathen Calendar	442
Theoretica	443
Four Kinds of Spectacles	447
Gymnastic Games	448
Tragedy and Comedy	448
Mimes	450
Pantomimes	451
Amphitheatre. — Gladiatorial Shows	455
The Circus. — Chariot Races	460

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

Fate of Greek Literature and Language	463
Roman Literature and Language	463
Christian Literature	464
Poetry	466
Sacred Writings	467
Legends	471
Spurious Gospels	472

Page
Lives of Saints - 473
History - 474
Apologies - 476
Hermeneutics - 477
Expositions of Faith - 478
Polemical Writings - 478
Christian Oratory - 479

CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE FINE ARTS.

Fine Arts - 486
Architecture - 488
Windows - 489
Subdivisions of the Church - 490
Sculpture - 493
Symbolism - 498
Person of the Saviour - 502
Earliest Images Gnostic - 505
Earliest Portraits of the Saviour - 507
The Father rarely represented - 508
The Virgin - 509
The Apostles - 512
Martyrdom not represented - 513
The Crucifix - 515
Paintings at Nola - 516
Music - 518

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION.

Christian Theology of the Period - 527
Separation of Christian Faith and Christian Morals never complete - 528
Christian Feelings never extinct - 529
Mythic Age of Christianity - 531

Page
Faith - - - - - - 532
Imaginative State of the Human Mind - - 533
Religious Impressions - - - - 536
Effect on Natural Philosophy - - - 537
Polytheistic Form of Christianity - - - 539
Worship of Saints and Angels - - - 541
of the Virgin - - - - - 544

ERRATA.

Page 399. line 9 of note, for "— " read "he."
—— 537. line 5. for "though" read "through."

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HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIANITY UNDER THE SONS OF CONSTANTINE.

CHAP. V.

Accession of the sons of Constantine.

If Christianity was making such rapid progress in the conquest of the world, the world was making fearful reprisals on Christianity. By enlisting new passions and interests in its cause, religion surrendered itself to an inseparable fellowship with those passions and interests. The more it mingles with the tide of human affairs, the more turbid becomes the stream of Christian history. In the intoxication of power, the Christian, like ordinary men, forgot his original character; and the religion of Jesus, instead of diffusing peace and happiness through society, might, to the superficial observer of human affairs, seem introduced only as a new element of discord and misery into the society of man.

The Christian emperor dies; he is succeeded by his sons, educated in the faith of the Gospel. The first act of the new reign is the murder of one of the brothers, and of the nephews of the deceased sovereign, who were guilty of being named in the

BOOK III.

will of Constantine as joint heirs to the empire. This act, indeed, was that of a ferocious soldiery, though the memory of Constantius is not free from the suspicion, at least of connivance in these bloody deeds. Christianity appears only in a favourable light as interposing between the assassins and their victim. Marcus, Bishop of Arethusa, saved Julian from his enemies: the future apostate was concealed under the altar of the church. Yet, on the accession of the sons of Constantine, to the causes of fraternal animosity usual on the division of a kingdom between several brothers, was added that of religious hostility. The two Emperors (for they were speedily reduced to two) placed themselves at the head of the two contending parties in Christianity. The weak and voluptuous Constans adhered with inflexible firmness to the cause of Athanasius; the no less weak and tyrannical Constantius, to that of Arianism. The East was arrayed against the West. At Rome, at Alexandria, at Sardica, and, afterwards, at Arles and Milan, Athanasius was triumphantly acquitted; at Antioch, at Philippopolis, and finally at Rimini, he was condemned with almost equal unanimity. Even within the church itself, the distribution of the superior dignities became an object of fatal ambition and strife. The streets of Alexandria and of Constantinople were deluged with blood by the partisans of rival bishops. In the latter, an officer of high distinction, sent by the Emperor to quell the tumult, was slain, and his body treated with the utmost indignity by the infuriated populace.

Religious differences of the two surviving sons.

To dissemble or to disguise these melancholy facts, is alike inconsistent with Christian truth and wisdom. In some degree they are accounted for by the proverbial reproach against history, that it is the record of human folly and crime; and history, when the world became impregnated with Christianity, did not at once assume a higher office. In fact, it extends its view only over the surface of society, below which, in general, lie human virtue and happiness. This would be especially the case with regard to Christianity, whether it withdrew from the sight of man, according to the monastic interpretation of its precepts, into solitary communion with the Deity, or, in its more genuine spirit, was content with exercising its humanising influence in the more remote and obscure quarters of the general social system.

Even the annals of the church take little notice of those cities where the Christian episcopate passed calmly down through a succession of pious and beneficent prelates, who lived and died in the undisturbed attachment and veneration of their Christian disciples, and respected by the hostile Pagans; men whose noiseless course of beneficence was constantly diminishing the mass of human misery, and improving the social, the moral, as well as the religious condition of mankind. But an election contested with violence, or a feud which divided a city into hostile parties, arrested the general attention, and was perpetuated in the records, at first of the church, afterwards of the empire.

BOOK III.

Moral more slow than religious revolution.

But, in fact, the theological opinions of Christianity naturally made more rapid progress than its moral influence. The former had only to overpower the resistance of a religion which had already lost its hold upon the mind, or a philosophy too speculative for ordinary understandings, and too unsatisfactory for the more curious and enquiring; it had only to enter, as it were, into a vacant place in the mind of man. But the moral influence had to contest, not only with the natural dispositions of man, but with the barbarism and depraved manners of ages. While, then, the religion of the world underwent a total change; the church rose on the ruins of the temple, and the pontifical establishment of Paganism became gradually extinct, or suffered violent suppression; the moral revolution was far more slow and far less complete. With a large portion of mankind, it must be admitted that the religion itself was Paganism under another form and with different appellations; with another part, it was the religion passively received, without any change in the moral sentiments or habits; with a third, and, perhaps, the more considerable part, there was a transfer of the passions and the intellectual activity to a new cause.* They were completely identified with Christianity, and to a certain degree actuated by its principles, but they did not apprehend the beautiful harmony which subsists

* "If," said the dying Bishop of Constantinople, "you would have for my successor a man who would edify you by the example of his life, and improve you by the purity of his precepts, choose Paul; if a man versed in the affairs of the world, and able to maintain the interests of the religion, your suffrages must be given to Macedonius." Socr.

between its doctrines and its moral perfection. Its dogmatic purity was the sole engrossing subject; the unity of doctrine superseded and obscured all other considerations, even of that sublimer unity of principles and effects, of the loftiest views of the divine nature, with the purest conceptions of human virtue. Faith not only overpowered, but discarded from her fellowship, Love and Peace. Every where there was exaggeration of one of the constituent elements of Christianity; that exaggeration which is the inevitable consequence of a strong impulse upon the human mind. Wherever men feel strongly, they act violently. The more speculative Christians, therefore, who were more inclined, in the deep and somewhat selfish solicitude for their own salvation, to isolate themselves from the infected mass of mankind, pressed into the extreme of asceticism; the more practical, who were earnest in the desire of disseminating the blessings of religion throughout society, scrupled little to press into their service whatever might advance their cause. With both extremes, the dogmatical part of the religion predominated. The monkish believer imposed the same severity upon the aberrations of the mind as upon the appetites of the body; and, in general, those who are severe to themselves, are both disposed and think themselves entitled to enforce the same severity on others. The other, as his sphere became more extensive, was satisfied with an adhesion to the Christian creed, instead of that total change of life demanded of the early Christian, and watched over with such

BOOK III.

jealous vigilance by the mutual superintendence of a small society. The creed, thus become the sole test, was enforced with all the passion of intense zeal, and guarded with the most subtle and scrupulous jealousy. In proportion to the admitted importance of the creed, men became more sternly and exclusively wedded to their opinions. Thus an antagonist principle of exclusiveness co-existed with the most comprehensive ambition. While they swept in converts indiscriminately from the palace and the public street; while the Emperor and the lowest of the populace were alike admitted on little more than the open profession of allegiance, they were satisfied if their allegiance in this respect was blind and complete. Hence a far larger admixture of human passions, and the common vulgar incentives of action, were infused into the expanding Christian body. Men became Christians, orthodox Christians, with little sacrifice of that which Christianity aimed chiefly to extirpate. Yet, after all, this imperfect view of Christianity had probably some effect in concentrating the Christian community, and holding it together by a new and more indissoluble bond. The world divided into two parties. Though the shades of Arianism, perhaps, if strictly decomposed, of Trinitarianism, were countless as the varying powers of conception or expression in man, yet they were soon consolidated into two compact masses. The semi-Arians, who approximated so closely to the Nicene creed, were forced back into the main body. Their fine distinctions were not seized by their adversaries, or by the general body

of the Christians. The bold and decisive definitiveness of the Athanasian doctrine admitted less discretion; and no doubt, though political vicissitudes had some influence on the final establishment of their doctrines, the more illiterate and less imaginative West was predisposed to the Athanasian opinions by its natural repugnance to the more vague and dubious theory. All, however, were enrolled under one or the other standard, and the party which triumphed, eventually would rule the whole Christian world.

Even the feuds of Christianity at this period, though with the few more dispassionate and reasoning of the Pagans they might retard its progress, in some respects contributed to its advancement; they assisted in breaking up that torpid stagnation which brooded over the general mind. It gave a new object of excitement to the popular feeling. The ferocious and ignorant populace of the large cities, which found a new aliment in Christian faction for their mutinous and sanguinary outbursts of turbulence, had almost been better left to sleep on in the passive and undestructive quiet of Pagan indifference. They were dangerous allies, more than dangerous, fatal to the purity of the Gospel.

Athanasius.

Athanasius stands out as the prominent character of the period, in the history, not merely of Christianity, but of the world. That history is one long controversy, the life of Athanasius one unwearied and incessant strife.* It is neither the serene course

* Life of Athanasius prefixed to his Works. Tillemont, Vie d'Athanase.

BOOK III.

of a being elevated by his religion above the cares and tumults of ordinary life, nor the restless activity of one perpetually employed in a conflict with the ignorance, vice, and misery of an unconverted people. Yet even now (so completely has this polemic spirit become incorporated with Christianity) the memory of Athanasius is regarded by many wise and good men with reverence, which, in Catholic countries, is actual adoration, in Protestant, approaches towards it.* It is impossible, indeed, not to admire the force of intellect which he centered on this minute point of theology, his intrepidity, his constancy; but had he not the power to allay the feud which his inexorable spirit tended to keep alive? Was the term Consubstantialism absolutely essential to Christianity? If a somewhat wider creed had been accepted, would not the truth at least as soon and as generally have prevailed? Could not the commanding or persuasive voice of Christianity have awed or charmed the troubled waters to peace?

But Athanasius, in exile, would consent to no peace which did not prostrate his antagonists before his feet. He had obtained complete command over the minds of the western Emperors. The demand for his restoration to his see was not an appeal to the justice, or the fraternal affection of Constantius; it was a question of peace or war.

* Compare Möhler, Athanasius der Grosse und seine zeit (Maintz, 1827), and Newman's Arians. The former is the work of a very powerful Roman Catholic writer, labouring to show that all the vital principles of Christianity were involved in this controversy; and stating *one side* of the question with consummate ability. It is the panegyric of a dutiful son on him whom he calls the father of church theology. p. 304.

CHAP. V.

Constantius submitted; he received the prelate, on his return, with courtesy, or rather with favour and distinction. Athanasius entered Alexandria at the head of a triumphal procession; the bishops of his party resumed their sees; all Egypt returned to its obedience; but the more inflexible Syria still waged the war with unallayed activity. A council was held at Tyre, in which new charges were framed against the Alexandrian prelate: — the usurpation of his see in defiance of his condemnation by a council, (the imperial power seems to have been treated with no great respect), for a prelate, it was asserted, deposed by a council, could only be restored by the same authority; violence and bloodshed during his re-occupation of the see; and malversation of sums of money intended for the poor, but appropriated to his own use. A rival council at Alexandria at once acquitted Athanasius on all these points; asserted his right to the see; appealed to and avouched the universal rejoicings at his restoration; his rigid administration of the funds entrusted to his care.*

A. D. 338. Restoration of Athanasius to Alexandria.

A. D. 340.

A more august assembly of Christian prelates met in the presence of the Emperor at Antioch. Ninety bishops celebrated the consecration of a splendid edifice, called the Church of Gold. The council then entered on the affairs of the church; a creed was framed satisfactory to all, except that it seemed carefully to exclude the term consubstantial or Homoousion. The council ratified the decrees of

A. D. 341. Council at Antioch.

* Compare throughout the ecclesiastical historians, Theodoret, Socrates, and Sozomen.

BOOK III.

that of Tyre, with regard to Athanasius. It is asserted on his part that the majority had withdrawn to their dioceses before the introduction of this question, and that a factious minority of forty prelates assumed and abused the authority of the council. They proceeded to nominate a new bishop of Alexandria. Pistus, who had before been appointed to the see, was passed over in silence, probably as too inactive or unambitious for their purpose. Gregory, a native of the wilder region of Cappadocia, but educated under Athanasius himself, in the more polished schools of Alexandria, was invested with this important dignity. Alexandria, peacefully reposing, it is said, under the parental episcopate of Athanasius, was suddenly startled by the appearance of an edict, signed by the imperial præfect, announcing the degradation of Athanasius, and the appointment of Gregory. Scenes of savage conflict ensued; the churches were taken as it were by storm; the priests of the Athanasian party were treated with the utmost indignity; virgins scourged; every atrocity perpetrated by unbridled multitudes, embittered by every shade of religious faction. The Alexandrian populace were always ripe for tumult and bloodshed. The Pagans and the Jews mingled in the fray, and seized the opportunity, no doubt, of shewing their impartial animosity to both parties; though the Arians (and, as the original causes of the tumult, not without justice) were loaded with the unpopularity of this odious alliance. They arrayed themselves on the side of the soldiery appointed to execute the decree of the præfect; and the Arian bishop is charged, not with much pro-

CHAP. V.

bability, with abandoning the churches to their pillage. Athanasius fled; a second time an exile, he took refuge in the West. He appeared again at Rome, in the dominions and under the protection of an orthodox Emperor; for Constans, who, after the death of Constantine, the first protector of Athanasius, had obtained the larger part of the empire belonging to his murdered brother, was no less decided in his support of the Nicene opinions. The two great Western prelates, Hosius of Cordova, eminent from his age and character, and Julius, bishop of Rome, from the dignity of his see, openly espoused his cause. Wherever Athanasius resided, — at Alexandria, in Gaul, in Rome, — in general the devoted clergy, and even the people, adhered with unshaken fidelity to his tenets. Such was the commanding dignity of his character, such his power of profoundly stamping his opinions on the public mind.

Athanasius flies to Rome.

The Arian party, independent of their speculative opinions, cannot be absolved from the unchristian heresy of cruelty and revenge. However darkly coloured, we cannot reject the general testimony to their acts of violence, wherever they attempted to regain their authority. Gregory is said to have attempted to compel bishops, priests, monks, and holy virgins, to Christian communion with a prelate thus forced upon them, by every kind of insult and outrage; by scourging and beating with clubs: those were fortunate who escaped with exile*. But if Alexandria was dis-

Usurpation of Gregory.

* Athanas. Oper., p. 112. 149. 350. 352., and the ecclesiastical historians in loc.

BOOK III.

turbed by the hostile excesses of the Arians, in Constantinople itself, the conflicting religious parties gave rise to the first of those popular tumults which so frequently, in later times, distracted and disgraced the city. Eusebius, formerly Bishop of Nicomedia, the main support of the Arian party, had risen to the episcopacy of the imperial city. His enemies reproached the worldly ambition which deserted an humbler for a more eminent see; but they were not less inclined to contest this important post with the utmost activity. At his death the Athanasian party revived the claims of Paul, whom they asserted to have been canonically elected, and unjustly deposed from the see; the Arians supported Macedonius. The dispute spread from the church into the streets, from the clergy to the populace; blood was shed; the whole city was in arms on one part or the other.

Bloody quarrel at Constantinople.

The Emperor was at Antioch; he commanded Hermogenes, who was appointed to the command of the cavalry in Thrace, to pass through Constantinople, and expel the intruder Paul. Hermogenes, at the head of his soldiery, advanced to force Paul from the church. The populace rose; the soldiers were repelled; the general took refuge in a house, which was instantly set on fire; the mangled body of Hermogenes was dragged through the streets, and at length cast into the sea. Constantius heard this extraordinary intelligence at Antioch. The contempt of the imperial mandate; the murder of an imperial officer in the contested nomination of a bishop, were as yet so new in the annals of the

world, as to fill him with equal astonishment and indignation. He mounted his horse, though it was winter, and the mountain-passes were dangerous and difficult with snow; he hastened with the utmost speed to Constantinople. But the deep humiliation of the senate and the heads of the people, who prostrated themselves at his feet, averted his resentment: the people were punished by a diminution of the usual largess of corn. Paul was expelled; but, as though some blame adhered to both the conflicting parties, the election of Macedonius was not confirmed, although he was allowed to exercise the episcopal functions. Paul retired, first to Thessalonica, subsequently to the court of Constans.

Effects of the Trinitarian controversy in the West.

The remoter consequences of the Athanasian controversy began to develope themselves at this early period. The Christianity of the East and the West gradually assumed a divergent and independent character. Though, during a short time, the Arianism of the Ostrogothic conquerors gave a temporary predominance in Italy to that creed, the West in general submitted, in uninquiring acquiescence, to the Trinitarianism of Athanasius. In the East, on the other hand, though the doctrines of Athanasius eventually obtained the superiority, the controversy gave birth to a long and unexhausted line of subordinate disputes. The East retained its mingled character of Oriental speculativeness and Greek subtlety. It could not abstain from investigating and analysing the divine nature, and the relations of Christ and the Holy Ghost to the Supreme

BOOK III.

Being. Macedonianism, Nestorianism, Eutychianism, with the fatal disputes relating to the procession of the Holy Ghost, during almost the last hours of the Byzantine empire, may be considered the lineal descendants of this prolific controversy. The opposition of the East and West, of itself tended to increase the authority of that prelate, who assumed his acknowledged station as the head and representative of the Western churches. The commanding and popular part taken by the Bishop of Rome, in favour of Athanasius and his doctrines, enabled him to stand forth in undisputed superiority, as at once the chief of the Western episcopate, and the champion of orthodoxy. The age of Hosius, and his residence in a remote province, withdrew the only competitor for this superiority. Athanasius took up his residence at Rome, and, under the protection of the Roman prelate, defied his adversaries to a new contest. Julius summoned the accusers of Athanasius to plead the cause before a council in Rome.* The Eastern prelates altogether disclaimed his jurisdiction, and rejected his pretensions to rejudge the cause of a bishop already condemned by the council of Tyre. The answer of Julius is directed rather to the justification of Athanasius than to the assertion of his own au-

Athanasius at Rome.

Julius, Bishop of Rome.

* Julius is far from asserting any individual authority, or pontifical supremacy. "Why do you alone write?" "Because I represent the *opinions* of the bishops of Italy." Epist. Julian. Athanas. Op. i. 146.

The ecclesiastical historians, however, in the next century, assert that Rome claimed a right of adjudication. Γνωρίζουσιν οὖν τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ Ῥώμης Ἰουλίῳ τὰ καθ' ἑαυτούς· ὁ δὲ ἅτε προνόμεα τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐκκλησίας ἐχούσης. Socr. E. H. ii. 15. Οἷα δὲ τῶν πάντων κηδεμονίας ἀυτῷ προσηκούσης διὰ τὴν ἀξίαν τοῦ θρόνου. Soz. E. H. iii. 8.

CHAP. V.

thority. The synod of Rome solemnly acquitted Athanasius, Paul, and all their adherents. The Western Emperor joined in the sentiments of his clergy. A second council at Milan, in the presence of Constans, confirmed the decree of Rome. Constans proposed to his brother to convoke a general council of both empires. A neutral or border ground was chosen for this decisive conflict. At Sardica met one hundred prelates from the West, from the East only seventy-five.* Notwithstanding his age and infirmities, Hosius travelled from the extremity of the empire: he at once took the lead in the assembly; and, it is remarkable that the Bishop of Rome, so zealous in the cause of Athanasius, alleged an excuse for his absence, which may warrant the suspicion that he was unwilling to be obscured in this important scene by the superior authority of Hosius. Five of the Western prelates, among whom were Ursacius of Singidunum and Valens of Mursa, embraced the Arian cause: the Arians complained of the defection of two bishops from their body, who betrayed their secret counsels to their adversaries.† In all these councils, it appears not to have occurred, that, religion being a matter of faith, the suffrages of the majority could not possibly impose a creed upon a conscientious minority. The question had been too often agitated to expect that it could be placed in a new light.

Synod at Rome.

A. D. 343. At Milan.

Council of Sardica. A. D. 345-6.

On matters of fact, the suffrages of the more nu-

* By some accounts there were 100 Western bishops; 73 Eastern.

† Concilia Labbe, vol. iii. Athanas. contr. Arian. &c.

BOOK III.

merous party might have weight, in the personal condemnation for instance or the acquittal of Athanasius; but as these suffrages could not convince the understanding of those who voted on the other side, the theological decisions must of necessity be rejected, unless the minority would submit likewise to the humiliating confession of insincerity, ignorance, or precipitancy in judgment.* The Arian minority did not await this issue; having vainly attempted to impede the progress of the council, by refusing to sanction the presence of persons excommunicated, they seceded to Philippopolis in Thrace. In these two cities sate the rival councils, each asserting itself the genuine representative of Christendom, issuing decrees, and anathematising their adversaries. The Arians are accused of maintaining their influence, even in the East, by acts of great cruelty. In Adrianople, in Alexandria, they enforced submission to their tenets by the scourge, and by heavy penalties.†

Rival council at Philippopolis.

The Western council at Milan accepted and ratified the decrees of the council of Sardica, absolving Athanasius of all criminality, and receiving his doctrines as the genuine and exclusive truths of the Gospel On a sudden, affairs took a new turn; Constantius threw himself, as it were, at the feet of Athanasius, and in three successive letters, entreated him to resume his episcopal

Reconciliation of Constantius with Athanasius. A. D. 349.

* The Oriental bishops protested against the assumption of supremacy by the Western. Novam legem introducere putaverunt, ut Orientales Episcopi ab Occidentalibus judicarentur. Apud Hilar. Fragm. iii.

† The cause of Marcellus of Ancyra, whom the Eusebian party accused of Sabellianism, was throughout connected with that of Athanasius.

throne. The Emperor and the prelate (who had delayed at first to obey, either from fear or from pride, the flattering invitation), met at Antioch with mutual expressions of respect and cordiality.* Constantius commanded all the accusations against Athanasius to be erased from the registers of the city. He commended the prelate to the people of Alexandria in terms of courtly flattery, which harshly contrast with his former, as well as with his subsequent, conduct to Athanasius. The Arian bishop, Gregory, was dead, and Athanasius, amid the universal joy, re-entered the city. The bishops crowded from all parts to salute and congratulate the prelate who had thus triumphed over the malice even of imperial enemies. Incense curled up in all the streets; the city was brilliantly illuminated. It was an ovation by the admirers of Athanasius; it is said to have been a Christian ovation; alms were lavished on the poor; every house resounded with prayer and thanksgiving as if it were a church; the triumph of Athanasius was completed by the recantation of Ursacius and Valens, two of his most powerful antagonists.†

This sudden change in the policy of Constantius is scarcely explicable upon the alleged motives. It is ascribed to the detection of an infamous conspiracy against one of the Western bishops, deputed on a mission to Constantius. The aged prelate

A. D. 349.

* The Emperor proposed to Athanasius to leave one church to the Arians at Alexandria; Athanasius dexterously eluded the request, by very fairly demanding that one church in Antioch, where the Arians predominated, should be set apart for those of his communion.

† Greg. Nazian. Enc. Athanas. Athanas. Hist. Arian.

BOOK III.

was charged with incontinence, but the accusation recoiled on its inventors. A man of infamous character, Onager the wild ass, the chief conductor of the plot, on being detected, avowed himself the agent of Stephen, the Arian bishop of Antioch. Stephen was ignominiously deposed from his see. Yet this single fact would scarcely have at once estranged the mind of Constantius from the interests of the Arian party; his subsequent conduct when, as Emperor of the whole world, he could again dare to display his deep-rooted hostility to Athanasius, induces the suspicion of political reasons. Constantius was about to be embarrassed with

Persian war.

the Persian war; at this dangerous crisis, the admonitions of his brother, not unmingled with warlike menace, might enforce the expediency at least of a temporary reconciliation with Athanasius. The political troubles of three years suspended the religious strife. The war of Persia brought some fame to the arms of Constantius; and in the more honourable character, not of the antagonist, but the

Death of Constans.

avenger of his murdered brother, the surviving son of Constantine again united the East and West under his sole dominion. The battle of Mursa, if we are to credit a writer somewhat more recent, was no less fatal to the interests of Athanasius than to the

War with Magnentius. A. D. 351.

arms of Magnentius.* Ursacius and Valens, after their recantation, had relapsed to Arianism. Valens was the Bishop of Mursa, and in the immediate neighbourhood of that town was fought the decisive

* Sulpicius Severus, ii. c. 54.

CHAP. V.

Battle of Mursa.

battle. Constantius retired with Valens into the principal church, to assist with his prayers rather than with his directions or personal prowess, the success of his army. The agony of his mind may be conceived, during the long suspense of a conflict on which the sovereignty of the world depended, and in which the conquerors lost more men than the vanquished.* Valens stood or knelt by his side; on a sudden, when the Emperor was wrought to the highest state of agitation, Valens proclaimed the tidings of his complete victory; intelligence communicated to the prelate by an angel from heaven. Whether Valens had anticipated the event by a bold fiction, or arranged some plan for obtaining rapid information, he appeared from that time to the Emperor as a man especially favoured by Heaven, a prophet, and one of good omen.

A. D. 351 to 355.

But either the fears of the Emperor, or the caution of the Arian party, delayed yet for three or four years to execute their revenge on Athanasius. They began with a less illustrious victim. Philip, the præfect of the East, received instructions to expel Paul, and to replace Macedonius on the episcopal throne of Constantinople. Philip remembered the fate of Hermogenes; he secured himself in the thermæ of Zeuxippus, and summoned the prelate to his presence. He then communicated his instructions, and frightened or persuaded the

* Magnentius is said by Zonaras, to have sacrificed a girl, to propitiate the gods on this momentous occasion. Lib. xiii. t. ii. p. 16, 17.

BOOK III.

Paul deposed from the bishopric of Constantinople. Macedonius reinstated.

aged Paul to consent to be secretly transported in a boat over the Bosphorus. In the morning, Philip appeared in his car, with Macedonius by his side in the pontifical attire; he drove directly to the church, but the soldiers were obliged to hew their way through the dense and resisting crowd to the altar. Macedonius passed over the murdered bodies (three thousand are said to have fallen) to the throne of the Christian prelate. Paul was carried in chains first to Emesa, afterwards to a wild town in the deserts about Mount Taurus. He had disappeared from the sight of his followers, and it is certain that he died in these remote regions. The Arians gave out that he died a natural death. It was the general belief of the Athanasians that his death was hastened, and even that he had been strangled by the hands of the præfect Philip.*

But before the decisive blow was struck against Athanasius, Constantius endeavoured to subdue the West to the Arian opinions. The Emperor, released from the dangers of war, occupied his triumphant leisure in Christian controversy. He seemed determined to establish his sole dominion over the religion as well as the civil obedience of his subjects. The Western bishops firmly opposed the conqueror of Magnentius. At the councils, first of Arles and afterwards of Milan, they refused to subscribe the condemnation of Athanasius, or to communicate with the Arians. Liberius, the new Bishop of Rome, refused the timid and disingenuous compromise to which his representative at

Councils of Arles and Milan.

Persecution of Liberius, Bishop of Rome.

* Athenas. Oper. i. 322. 348. Socrat. E. H. ii. 26.

Arles, Vincent, deacon of Rome, had agreed; to assent to the condemnation of Athanasius, if, at the same time, a decisive anathema should be issued against the tenets of Arius. At Milan, the bishops boldly asserted the independence of the church upon the empire. The Athanasian party forgot, or chose not to remember, that they had unanimously applauded the interference of Constantine, when, after the Nicene council, he drove the Arian bishops into exile. Thus it has always been: the sect or party which has the civil power in its favour is embarrassed with no doubts as to the legality of its interference; when hostile, it resists as an unwarrantable aggression on its own freedom, that which it has not scrupled to employ against its adversaries.

New charges against Athanasius.

The new charges against Athanasius were of very different degrees of magnitude and probability. He was accused of exciting the hostility of Constans against his brother. The fact that Constans had threatened to reinstate the exiled prelate by force of arms might give weight to this charge; but the subsequent reconciliation, the gracious reception of Athanasius by the Emperor, the public edicts in his favour, had, in all justice, cancelled the guilt, if there were really guilt, in this undue influence over the mind of Constans. He was accused of treasonable correspondence with the usurper Magnentius. Athanasius repelled this charge with natural indignation. He must be a monster of ingratitude, worthy a thousand deaths, if he had leagued with the murderer of his bene-

BOOK III.

factor, Constans. He defied his enemies to the production of any letters; he demanded the severest investigation, the strictest examination, of his own secretaries or those of Magnentius. The descent is rapid from these serious charges to that of having officiated in a new and splendid church, the Cæsarean, without the permission of the Emperor; and the exercising a paramount and almost monarchical authority over the churches along the whole course of the Nile, even beyond his legitimate jurisdiction. The first was strangely construed into an intentional disrespect to the Emperor, the latter might fairly be attributed to the zeal of Athanasius for the extension of Christianity. Some of these points might appear beyond the jurisdiction of an ecclesiastical tribunal; and in the council of Milan there seems to have been an inclination to separate the cause of Athanasius from that of his doctrine. As at Arles, some proposed to abandon the person of Athanasius to the will of the Emperor, if a general condemnation should be passed against the tenets of Arius.

Council of Milan.

Three hundred ecclesiastics formed the council of Milan. Few of these were from the East. The Bishop of Rome did not appear in person to lead the orthodox party. His chief representative was Lucifer of Cagliari, a man of ability, but of violent temper and unguarded language. The Arian faction was headed by Ursacius and Valens, the old adversaries of Athanasius, and by the Emperor himself. Constantius, that the proceedings might take place more immediately under his own super-

intendence, adjourned the assembly from the church to the palace. This unseemly intrusion of a layman in the deliberations of the clergy, unfortunately, was not without precedent. Those who had proudly hailed the entrance of Constantine into the synod of Nice could not, consistently, deprecate the presence of his son at Milan.

A. D. 355. The controversy became a personal question between the Emperor and his refractory subject. The Emperor descended into the arena, and mingled in all the fury of the conflict. Constantius was not content with assuming the supreme place as Emperor, or interfering in the especial province of the bishops, the theological question, he laid claim to direct inspiration. He was commissioned by a vision from Heaven to restore peace to the afflicted church. The scheme of doctrine which he proposed was asserted by the Western bishops to be strongly tainted with Arianism. The prudence of the Athanasian party was not equal to their firmness and courage. The obsequious and almost adoring court of the Emperor must have stood aghast at the audacity of the ecclesiastical synod. Their language was that of vehement invective, rather than dignified dissent or calm remonstrance. Constantius, concealed behind a curtain, listened to the debate; he heard his own name coupled with that of heretic, of Antichrist. His indignation now knew no bounds. He proclaimed himself the champion of the Arian doctrines, and the accuser of Athanasius. Yet flatteries, persuasions, bribes, menaces, penalties, exiles, were neces-

BOOK III.

sary to extort the assent of the resolute assembly. Then they became conscious of the impropriety of a lay Emperor's intrusion into the debates of an ecclesiastical synod. They demanded a free council, in which the Emperor should neither preside in person nor by his commissary. They lifted up their hands, and entreated the angry Constantius not to mingle up the affairs of the state and the church.* Three prelates, Lucifer of Cagliari, Eusebius of Vercellæ, Dionysius of Milan, were sent into banishment, to places remote from each other, and the most inhospitable regions of the empire. Liberius, the Roman pontiff, rejected with disdain the presents of the Emperor; he resisted with equal firmness his persuasions and his acts of violence.

Fall of Liberius.

Though his palace was carefully closed and garrisoned by some of his faithful flock, Liberius was seized at length, and carried to Milan. He withstood, somewhat contemptuously, the personal entreaties and arguments of the Emperor.† He rejected with disdain the imperial offers of money for his journey, and told him to keep it to pay his army. The same offer was made by Eusebius the eunuch: — "Does a sacrilegious robber like thee think to give alms to me, as to a mendicant?" He was exiled to Berbea, a city of Thrace. An Arian prelate, Felix, was forced upon the unwilling city. But two years of exile broke the spirit of Liberius.

* Μηδὲ ἀναμίσγειν τὴν Ῥωμαϊκὴν τῇ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διατάγῃ. Athanas. ad Mon. c. 34. 36. Compare c. 52.

† Theodoret, iv. 16.

He began to listen to the advice of the Arian bishop of Berbea; the solitude, the cold climate, and the discomforts of this uncongenial region, had more effect than the presents or the menaces of the Emperor. He signed the Arian formulary of Sirmium; he assented to the condemnation of Athanasius. The fall of the aged Hosius increased the triumph of the Arians. Some of the Catholic writers reproach with undue bitterness the weakness of an old man, whose nearer approach to the grave, they assert, ought to have confirmed him in his inalienable fidelity to Christ. But even Christianity has no power over that mental imbecility which accompanies the decay of physical strength; and this act of feebleness ought not, for an instant, to be set against the unblemished virtue of a whole life.

Fall of Hosius.

Constantius, on his visit to Rome, was astonished by an address, presented by some of the principal females of the city in their most splended attire, to entreat the restoration of Liberius. The Emperor offered to re-admit Liberius to a co-ordinate authority with the Arian bishop, Felix. The females rejected with indignant disdain this dishonourable compromise; and when Constantius commanded a similar proposition to be publicly read in the circus at the time of games, he was answered by a general shout, "One God, one Christ, one bishop."

Reception of Constantius at Rome.

Had then the Christians, if this story be true, already overcome their aversion to the public games? or are we to suppose that the whole populace of Rome took an interest in the appointment of the Christian pontiff?

BOOK III.

Orders to remove Athanasius.

Athanasius awaited in tranquil dignity the bursting storm. He had eluded the imperial summons to appear at Milan, upon the plea that it was ambiguous and obscure. Constantius, either from some lingering remorse, from reluctance to have his new condemnatory ordinances confronted with his favourable, and almost adulatory, testimonies to the innocence of Athanasius, or from fear lest a religious insurrection in Alexandria and Egypt should embarrass the government, and cut off the supplies of corn from the Eastern capital, refused to issue any written order for the deposal and expulsion of Athanasius. He chose, apparently, to retain the power, if convenient, of disowning his emissaries. Two secretaries were despatched with a verbal message, commanding his abdication. Athanasius treated the imperial officers with the utmost courtesy; but respectfully demanded their written instructions. A kind of suspension of hostilities seems to have been agreed upon, till further instructions could be obtained from the Emperor. But in the mean time, Syrianus, the duke of the province, was drawing the troops from all parts of Libya and Egypt to invest and occupy the city. A force of 5000 men was thought necessary to depose a peaceable Christian prelate. The great events in the life of Athanasius, as we have already seen on two occasions, seem, either designedly or of themselves, to take a highly dramatic form. It was midnight, and the archbishop, surrounded by the more devout of his flock, was performing the solemn ceremony, previous to the sacramental service of the

CHAP. V.

Tumult in the church of Alexandria.

next day, in the church of St. Theonas. Suddenly the sound of trumpets, the trampling of steeds, the clash of arms, the bursting the bolts of the doors, interrupted the silent devotions of the assembly. The bishop on his throne, in the depth of the choir, on which fell the dim light of the lamps, beheld the gleaming arms of the soldiery, as they burst into the nave of the church. The archbishop, as the ominous sounds grew louder, commanded the chaunting of the 135th (136th) Psalm. The choristers' voices swelled into the solemn strain: — "Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is gracious;" the people took up the burthen, "For his mercy endureth for ever!" The clear, full voices of the congregation rose over the wild tumult, now without, and now within, the church.

A discharge of arrows commenced the conflict; and Athanasius calmly exhorted his people to continue their only defensive measures, their prayers to their Almighty Protector. Syrianus at the same time ordered the soldiers to advance. The cries of the wounded; the groans of those who were trampled down in attempting to force their way out through the soldiery; the shouts of the assailants, mingled in wild and melancholy uproar. But before the soldiers had reached the end of the sanctuary, the pious disobedience of his clergy, and of a body of monks, hurried the archbishop by some secret passage out of the tumult. His escape appeared little less than miraculous to his faithful followers. The riches of the altar, the sacred ornaments of the church, and even the consecrated virgins, were aban-

BOOK III.

doned to the licence of an exasperated soldiery. The Catholics in vain drew up an address to the Emperor, appealing to his justice against this sacrilegious outrage; they suspended the arms of the soldiery, which had been left on the floor of the church, as a reproachful memorial of the violence. Constantius confirmed the acts of his officers.*

George of Cappadocia.

The Arians were prepared to replace the deposed prelate; their choice fell on another Cappadocian more savage and unprincipled than the former one. Constantius commended George of Cappadocia to the people of Alexandria, as a prelate above praise, the wisest of teachers, the fittest guide to the kingdom of heaven. His adversaries paint him in the blackest colours; the son of a fuller, he had been in turns a parasite, a receiver of taxes, a bankrupt. Ignorant of letters, savage in manners, he was taken up, while leading a vagabond life, by the Arian prelate of Antioch, and made a priest before he was a Christian. He employed the collections made for the poor in bribing the eunuchs of the palace. But he possessed no doubt, great worldly ability; he was without fear and without remorse. He entered Alexandria environed by the troops of Syrianus. His presence let loose the rabid violence of party; the Arians exacted ample vengeance for their long period of depression; houses were plundered; monasteries burned; tombs broken open, to search for concealed Athanasians, or for the prelate himself, who still eluded their pur-

* Athanas. Apol. de Fugâ, vol. i. p. 334.; ad Monachos, 373. 378. 393. 395.; ad Const. 307. 310. Tillemont, Vie d'Athanase.

suit; bishops were insulted; virgins scourged; the soldiery encouraged to break up every meeting of the Catholics by violence, and even by inhuman tortures. The Duke Sebastian, at the head of 3000 troops, charged a meeting of the Athanasian Christians: no barbarity was too revolting; they are said to have employed instruments of torture to compel them to Christian unity with the Arians; females were scourged with the prickly branches of the palm-tree. The Pagans readily transferred their allegiance, so far as allegiance was demanded; while the savage and ignorant among them rejoiced in the occasion for plunder and cruelty. Others hailed these feuds, and almost anticipated the triumphant restoration of their own religion. Men, they thought, must grow weary and disgusted with a religion productive of so much crime, bloodshed, and misery. Echoing back the language of the Athanasians, they shouted out—"Long life to the Emperor Constantius, and the Arians who have abjured Christianity." And Christianity they seem to have abjured, though not in the sense intended by their adversaries. They had abjured all Christian humanity, holiness, and peace.

The avarice of George was equal to his cruelty. Exactions were necessary to maintain his interest with the eunuchs, to whom he owed his promotion. The prelate of Alexandria forced himself into the secular affairs of the city. He endeavoured to secure a monopoly of the nitron produced in the lake Mareotis, of the salt-works, and of the papyrus. He became a manufacturer of those painted coffins which were still in use among the Egyptians.

BOOK III.

Once he was expelled by a sudden insurrection of the people, who surrounded the church, in which he was officiating, and threatened to tear him in pieces. He took refuge in the court, which was then at Sirmium, and a few months beheld him reinstated by the command of his faithful patron the Emperor.* A reinstated tyrant is, in general, the most cruel oppressor; and, unless party violence has blackened the character of George of Cappadocia beyond even its ordinary injustice, the addition of revenge, and the haughty sense of impunity, derived from the imperial protection, to the evil passions already developed in his soul, rendered him a still more intolerable scourge to the devoted city.

Every where the Athanasian bishops were expelled from their sees; they were driven into banishment. The desert was constantly sounding with the hymns of these pious and venerable exiles, as they passed along, loaded with chains, to the remote and savage place of their destination; many of them bearing the scars, and wounds, and mutilations, which had been inflicted upon them by their barbarous persecutors, to enforce their compliance with the Arian doctrines.

Escape and retreat of Athanasius.

Athanasius, after many strange adventures; having been concealed in a dry cistern, and in the chamber of a beautiful woman, who attended him with the most officious devotion (his awful character was not even tinged with the breath of suspicion), found refuge at length among the monks of the desert. Egypt is bordered on all sides by wastes

A. D. 356.

* He was at Sirmium, May, 359; restored in October.

of sand, or by barren rocks, broken into caves and intricate passes; and all these solitudes were now peopled by the fanatic followers of the hermit Antony. They were all devoted to the opinions, and attached to the person, of Athanasius. The austerities of the prelate extorted their admiration: as he had been the great example of a dignified, active, and zealous bishop, so was he now of an ascetic and mortified solitary. The most inured to self-inflicted tortures of mind and body found themselves equalled, if not outdone, in their fasts and austerities by the lofty Patriarch of Alexandria. Among these devoted adherents, his security was complete: their passionate reverence admitted not the fear of treachery. The more active and inquisitive the search of his enemies, he had only to plunge deeper into the inaccessible and inscrutable desert. From this solitude Athanasius himself is supposed sometimes to have issued forth, and, passing the seas, to have traversed even parts of the West, animating his followers, and confirming the faith of his whole widely disseminated party. His own language implies his personal, though secret presence at the councils of Seleucia and Rimini.*

From the desert, unquestionably, came forth many of those writings which must have astonished the Heathen world by their unprecedented boldness. For the first time since the foundation of the empire, the government was more or less publicly assailed in addresses, which arraigned its mea-

* Athanas. Oper. vol. i. p. 869. Compare Tillemont, Vie d'Athanase.

BOOK III.

sures as unjust, and as transgressing its legitimate authority, and which did not spare the person of the reigning Emperor. In the West, as well as in the East, Constantius was assailed with equal freedom of invective. The book of Hilary of Poitiers against Constantius, is said not to have been made public till after the death of the Emperor; but it was most likely circulated among the Catholics of the West; and the author exposed himself to the activity of hostile informers, and the indiscretion of fanatical friends. The Emperor is declared to be Antichrist, a tyrant, not in secular, but likewise in religious affairs; the sole object of his reign was to make a free gift to the devil of the whole world, for which Christ had suffered.* Lucifer of Cagliari,

Hilary of Poitiers.

Lucifer of Cagliari.

* Nihil prorsus aliud egit, quam ut orbem terrarum, pro quo Christus passus est, diabolo condonaret. Adv. Constant. c. 15. Hilary's highest indignation is excited by the gentle and insidious manner with which he confesses that Constantius endeavoured to compass his unholy end. He would not honour them with the dignity of martyrs, but he used the prevailing persuasion of bribes, flatteries, and honours — Non dorsa cædit, sed ventrem palpat; non trudit carcere ad libertatem, sed intra palatium honorat ad servitutem; non latera vexat, sed cor occupat * * non contendit ne vincatur, sed adulatur ut dominetur. There are several other remarkable passages in this tract. Constantius wished to confine the creed to the language of scripture. This was rejected, as infringing on the authority of the bishops, and the forms of Apostolic preaching. Nolo, inquit, verba quæ non scripta sunt dici. Hoc tanden rogo, quis episcopis jubeat et quis apostolicæ prædicationis vetet formam? c. 16. Among the sentences ascribed to the Arians, which so much shocked the Western bishops, there is one which is evidently the argument of a strong anti-materialist asserting the sole existence of the Father, and that the terms of son and generation, &c., are not to be received in a literal sense. Erat Deus quod est. Pater non erat, quia neque ei filius; nam si filius, necesse est ut et fœmina sit, &c. One phrase has a singularly Oriental, I would say, Indian cast. How much soever the Son expands himself towards the knowledge of the Father, so much the Father super-expands himself, lest he should be known by the Son. Quantum enim Filius se extendit cognoscere Patrem, tantum Pater superextendit se, ne cognitus Filio sit. c. 13. The parties, at least in the West, were speak-

CHAP. V.

whose violent temper afterwards distracted the Western church with a schism, is now therefore repudiated by the common consent of all parties. But Athanasius speaks in ardent admiration of the intemperate writings of this passionate man, and once describes him as inflamed by the spirit of God. Lucifer, in his banishment, sent five books full of the most virulent invective to the Emperor. Constantius—it was the brighter side of his religious character—received these addresses with almost contemptuous equanimity. He sent a message to Lucifer, to demand if he was the author of these works. Lucifer replied not merely by an intrepid acknowledgment of his former writings, but by a sixth, in still more unrestrained and exaggerated language. Constantius was satisfied with banishing him to the Thebaid. Athanasius himself, who in his public vindication addressed to Constantius, maintained the highest respect for the imperial dignity, in his Epistle to the Solitaries gives free vent and expression to his vehement and contemptuous sentiments. His recluse friends are cautioned, indeed, not to disclose the dangerous document, in which the tyrants of the Old Testament, Pharaoh, Ahab,

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ing two totally distinct languages. It would be unjust to Hilary not to acknowledge the beautiful and Christian sentiments scattered through his two former addresses to Constantius, which are firm, but respectful; and if rigidly, yet sincerely, dogmatic. His plea for toleration, if not very consistently maintained, is expressed with great force and simplicity. Deus cognitionem sui docuit potius quam exegit. * * Deus universitatis est Dominus; non requirit coactam confessionem. Nostrâ potius non suâ causâ venerandus est * * simplicitate quærendus est, confessione discendus est, charitate amandus est, timore venerandus est, voluntatis probitate retinendus est. Lib. i. c. 6.

BOOK III.

Belshazzar, are contrasted, to his disadvantage, with the base, the cruel, the hypocritical Constantius. It is curious to observe this new element of freedom, however at present working in a concealed, irregular, and, perhaps, still-guarded manner, mingling itself up with, and partially up-heaving, the general prostration of the human mind. The Christian, or, in some respects, it might be more justly said, the hierarchical principle, was entering into the constitution of human society, as an antagonist power to that of the civil sovereign. The Christian community was no longer a separate republic, governed within by its own laws, yet submitting, in all but its religious observances, to the general ordinances. By the establishment of Christianity under Constantine, and the gradual reunion of two sections of mankind into one civil society, those two powers, that of the church and the state, became co-ordinate authorities, which, if any difference should arise between the heads of the respective supremacies, — if the Emperor and the dominant party in Christendom should take opposite sides, led to inevitable collision. This crisis had already arrived. An Arian emperor was virtually excluded from a community in which the Athanasian doctrines prevailed. The son of Constantine belonged to an excommunicated class, to whom the dominant party refused the name of Christians. Thus these two despotisms, both founded on opinion (for obedience to the imperial authority was rooted in the universal sentiment), instead of gently counteracting and mitigating each other, came at once into

direct and angry conflict. The Emperor might with justice begin to suspect that, instead of securing a peaceful and submissive ally, he had raised up a rival or a master; for the son of Constantine was thus in his turn disdainfully ejected from the society which his father had incorporated with the empire. It may be doubted how far the violences and barbarities ascribed by the Catholics to their Arian foes may be attributed to the indignation of the civil power at this new and determined resistance. Though Constantius might himself feel or affect a compassionate disdain at these unusual attacks on his person and dignity, the general feeling of the Heathen population, and many of the local governors, might resist this contumacious contempt of the supreme authority. It is difficult otherwise to account for the general tumult excited by these disputes in Alexandria, in Constantinople, and in Rome, where at least a very considerable part of the population had no concern in the religious quarrel. The old animosity against Christianity would array itself under the banners of one of the conflicting parties, or take up the cause of the insulted sovereignty of the Emperor. The Athanasian party constantly assert that the Arians courted, or at least did not decline, the invidious alliance of the Pagans.

Mutual accusations of cruelty.

But in truth, in the horrible cruelties perpetrated during these unhappy divisions, it was the same savage ferocity of manners, which half a century before had raged against the Christian church, which now apparently raged in its cause.* The abstruse

* See the depositions of the bishops assembled at Sardica, of the violence which they had themselves endured at the hands of the

BOOK III.

tenets of the Christian theology became the ill-understood, perhaps unintelligible, watchwords of violent and disorderly men. The rabble of Alexandria and other cities availed themselves of the commotion to give loose to their suppressed passion for the excitement of plunder and bloodshed. How far the doctrines of Christianity had worked down into the populace of the great cities cannot be ascertained, or even conjectured; its spirit had not in the least mitigated their ferocity and inhumanity. If Christianity is accused as the immediate exciting cause of these disastrous scenes, the predisposing principle was in that uncivilised nature of man, which not merely was unallayed by the gentle and humanising tenets of the Gospel, but, as it has perpetually done, pressed the Gospel itself, as it were, into its own unhallowed service.

Arians. Alii autem gladiorum signa, plagas et cicatrices ostendebant. Alii se fame ab ipsis excruciatos querebantur. Et hæc non ignobiles testificabantur viri, sed de ecclesiis omnibus electi propter quas huc convenerunt, res gestas edocebant, milites armatos, populos cum fustibus, judicum minas, falsarum literarum suppositiones. * * Ad hæc virginum nudationes, incendia ecclesiarum, carceres adversos ministros Dei. Hilar. Fragm. Op. Hist. ii. c. 4.

The Arians retort the same accusations of violence, cruelty, and persecution, against Athanasius. They say—Per vim, per cædem, per bellum, Alexandrinorum ecclesias deprædatus;—and this, per pugnas et *cædes gentilium*. Decretum Synodi Orientalium Episcoporum apud Sardicam, apud S. Hilarium.

Immensa autem confluxerat ad Sardicam multitudo sceleratorum omnium et perditorum, adventantium de Constantinopoli, de Alexandriâ, qui rei homicidiorum, rei sanguinis, rei cædis, rei latrociniorum, rei prædarum, rei spoliorum, nefandorumque omnium sacrilegiorum et criminum rei; qui altaria confregerunt, ecclesias incenderunt, domosque privatorum compilaverunt; profanatores mysteriorum, proditoresque sacramentorum Christi; qui impiam sceleratamque hæreticorum doctrinam contra ecclesiæ fidem asserentes, sapientissimos presbyteros Dei, diacones, sacerdotes, atrociter demactaverunt. Ibid. 19. And this protest, full of these tremendous charges, was signed by the eighty seceding Eastern bishops.

CHAP. V.

The severe exclusiveness of dogmatic theology attained its height in this controversy. Hitherto, the Catholic and heretical doctrines had receded from each other at the first outset, as it were, and drawn off to opposite and irreconcileable extremes. The heretics had wandered away into the boundless regions of speculation; they had differed on some of the most important elementary principles of belief; they had rarely admitted any common basis for argument. Here the contending parties set out from nearly the same principles, admitted the same authority, and seemed, whatever their secret bias or inclination, to differ only on the import of one word. Their opinions, like parallel lines in mathematics, seemed to be constantly approximating, yet found it impossible to unite. The Athanasians taunted the Arians with the infinite variations in their belief: Athanasius recounts no less than eleven creeds. But the Arians might have pleaded their anxiety to reconcile themselves to the church, their earnest solicitude to make every advance towards a reunion, provided they might be excused the adoption of the one obnoxious word, the Homoousion, or Consubstantialism. But the inflexible orthodoxy of Athanasius will admit no compromise; nothing less than complete unity, not merely of expression, but of mental conception, will satisfy the rigour of the ecclesiastical dictator, who will permit no single letter, and, as far as he can detect it, no shadow of thought, to depart from his peremptory creed. He denounces his adversaries, for the least deviation, as enemies of Christ; he presses them with

BOOK III.

consequences drawn from their opinions; and, instead of spreading wide the gates of Christianity, he seems to unbar them with jealous reluctance, and to admit no one without the most cool and inquisitorial scrutiny into the most secret arcana of his belief.

Athanasius as a writer.

In the writings of Athanasius is embodied the perfection of polemic divinity. His style, indeed, has no splendour, no softness, nothing to kindle the imagination, or melt the heart. Acute, even to subtlety, he is too earnest to degenerate into scholastic trifling. It is stern logic, addressed to the reason of those who admitted the authority of Christianity. There is no dispassionate examination, no candid philosophic inquiry, no calm statement of his adversaries' case, no liberal acknowledgment of the infinite difficulties of the subject, scarcely any consciousness of the total insufficiency of human language to trace the question to its depths; all is peremptory, dictatorial, imperious; the severe conviction of the truth of his own opinions, and the inference that none but culpable motives, either of pride, or strife, or ignorance, can blind his adversaries to their cogent and irrefragable certainty. Athanasius walks on the narrow and perilous edge of orthodoxy with a firmness and confidence which it is impossible not to admire. It cannot be doubted that he was deeply, intimately, persuaded that the vital power and energy, the truth, the consolatory force of Christianity, entirely depended on the unquestionable elevation of the Saviour to the most absolute equality with the Parent Godhead. The

ingenuity with which he follows out his own views of the consequences of their errors is wonderfully acute; but the thought constantly occurs, whether a milder and more conciliating tone would not have healed the wounds of afflicted Christianity; whether his lofty spirit is not conscious that his native element is that of strife rather than of peace.*

Though nothing can contrast more strongly with the expansive and liberal spirit of primitive Christianity than the repulsive tone of this exclusive theology, yet this remarkable phasis of Christianity seems to have been necessary, and not without advantage to the permanence of the religion. With the civilisation of mankind, Christianity was about to pass through the ordeal of those dark ages which followed the irruption of the barbarians. During this period, Christianity was to subsist as the conservative principle of social order and the sacred charities of life, the sole, if not always faithful, guardian of ancient knowledge, of letters, and of arts. But in order to preserve its own existence, it assumed, of necessity, another form. It must have a splendid and imposing ritual, to command the barbarous minds of its new proselytes, and one which might be performed by an illiterate priesthood; for the mass of the priesthood could not but be involved in the general darkness of the times. It must likewise have brief and definite formularies of doctrine. As the original languages,

* At a later period, Athanasius seems to have been less rigidly exclusive against the Semi-Arians. Compare Möhler, ii. p. 230.

BOOK III.

and even the Latin, fell into disuse, and before the modern languages of Europe were sufficiently formed to admit of translations, the sacred writings receded from general use; they became the depositaries of Christian doctrine, totally inaccessible to the laity, and almost as much so to the lower clergy. Creeds therefore became of essential importance to compress the leading points of Christian doctrine into a small compass. And as the barbarous and ignorant mind cannot endure the vague and the indefinite, so it was essential that the main points of doctrine should be fixed and cast into plain and emphatic propositions. The theological language was firmly established before the violent breaking up of society; and no more was required of the barbarian convert than to accept with uninquiring submission the established formulary of the faith, and gaze in awe-struck veneration at the solemn ceremonial.

Necessity of creeds during the succeeding centuries.

Influence of Athanasian controversy on the growth of the papal power.

The Athanasian controversy powerfully contributed to establish the supremacy of the Roman pontiff. It became almost a contest between Eastern and Western Christendom; at least the West was neither divided like the East, nor submitted with the same comparatively willing obedience, to the domination of Arianism under the imperial authority. It was necessary that some one great prelate should take the lead in this internecine strife. The only Western bishop whom his character would designate as this leader was Hosius, the Bishop of Cordova. But age had now disqualified this good man, whose moderation, abilities, and proba-

bly important services to Christianity in the conversion of Constantine, had recommended him to the common acceptance of the Christian world, as president of the council of Nice. Where this acknowledged superiority of character and talent was wanting, the dignity of the see would command the general respect; and what see could compete, at least, in the West, with Rome? Antioch, Alexandria, or Constantinople, could alone rival, in pretensions to Christian supremacy, the old metropolis of the empire: and those sees were either fiercely contested, or occupied by Arian prelates. Athanasius himself, by his residence, at two separate periods, at Rome, submitted as it were his cause to the Roman pontiff. Rome became the centre of the ecclesiastical affairs of the West; and, since the Trinitarian opinions eventually triumphed through the whole of Christendom, the firmness and resolution with which the Roman pontiffs, notwithstanding the temporary fall of Liberius, adhered to the orthodox faith; their uncompromising attachment to Athanasius, who, by degrees, was sanctified and canonised in the memory of Christendom, might be one groundwork for that belief in their infallibility, which, however it would have been repudiated by Cyprian, and never completely prevailed in the East, became throughout the West the inalienable spiritual heirloom of the Roman pontiffs. Christian history will hereafter show how powerfully this monarchical principle, if not established, yet greatly strengthened, by these consequences of the Athanasian controversy, tended to consolidate and

BOOK III.

so to maintain, in still expanding influence, the Christianity of Europe.*

Superiority of Arianism.

This conflict continued with unabated vigour till the close of the reign of Constantius. Arianism gradually assumed the ascendant, through the violence and the arts of the Emperor; all the more distinguished of the orthodox bishops were in exile, or, at least, in disgrace. Though the personal influence of Athanasius was still felt throughout Christendom, his obscure place of concealment was probably unknown to the greater part of his own adherents. The aged Hosius had died in his apostasy. Hilary of Poictiers, the Bishop of Milan, and the violent Lucifer of Cagliari, were in exile, and, though Constantius had consented to the return of Liberius to his see, he had returned with the disgrace of having consented to sign the new formulary framed at Sirmium, where the term, Consubstantial, if not rejected, was, at least, suppressed. Yet the popularity of Liberius was undiminished, and the whole city indignantly rejected the insidious proposition of Constantius, that Libe-

* The orthodox Synod of Sardica admits the superior dignity of the successors of St. Peter. Hoc enim optimum et valde congruentissimum esse videbitur, si ad caput, id est, ad Petri Apostoli sedem, de singulis quibusque provinciis Domini referant sacerdotes. Epist. Syn. Sard. apud Hilarium, Fragm. Oper. Hist. ii. c. 9. It was disclaimed with equal distinctness by the seceding Arians. Novam legem introducere putaverunt, ut Orientales Episcopi ab Occidentalibus judicarentur. Fragm. iii. c. 12. In a subsequent clause, they condemn Julius, Bishop of Rome, by name. It is difficult to calculate the effect which would commonly be produced on men's minds by their involving in one common cause the two tenets, which, in fact, bore no relation to each other,—the orthodox belief in the Trinity, and the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. Sozomen, iv. 11. 13. Theodoret, ii. 17. Philostorgius, iv. 3.

rius and his rival Felix should rule the see with conjoint authority. The parties had already come to blows, and even to bloodshed, when Felix, who it was admitted, had never swerved from the creed of Nice, and whose sole offence was entering into communion with the Arians, either from moderation, or conscious of the inferiority of his party, withdrew to a neighbouring city, where he soon closed his days, and relieved the Christians of Rome from the apprehension of a rival pontiff. The unbending resistance of the Athanasians was no doubt confirmed, not merely by the variations in the Arian creed, but by the new opinions which they considered its legitimate offspring, and which appeared to justify their worst apprehensions of its inevitable consequences. Aetius formed a new sect, which not merely denied the consubstantiality, but the similitude of the Son to the Father. He was not only not of the same, but of a totally different, nature. Aetius, according to the account of his adversaries, was a bold and unprincipled adventurer * ; and the career of a person of this class is exemplified in his life. The son of a soldier, at one time condemned to death and to the confiscation of his property, Aetius became a humble artisan, first as

Heresy of Aetius.

* Socrates, ii. 35. Sozomen, iii. 15., iv. 12. Philostorg. iii. 15. 17. Suidas, voc. Αετιος. Epiphan. Hæres. 76. Gregor. Nyss. contra Eunom.

The most curious part in the History of Aetius is his attachment to the Aristotelian philosophy. With him appears to have begun the long strife between Aristotelianism and Platonism in the church. Aetius, to prove his unimaginative doctrines, employed the severe and prosaic categories of Aristotle, repudiating the prevailing Platonic mode of argument used by Origen and Clement of Alexandria. Socrates, ii. c. 35.

BOOK III.

a worker in copper, afterwards in gold. His dishonest practices obliged him to give up the trade, but not before he had acquired some property. He attached himself to Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch; was expelled from the city by his successor; studied grammar at Anazarba; was encouraged by the Arian bishop of that see, named Athanasius; returned to Antioch; was ordained deacon; and again expelled the city. Discomfited in a public disputation with a Gnostic, he retired to Alexandria, where, being exercised in the art of rhetoric, he revenged himself on a Manichean, who died of shame. He then became a public itinerant teacher, practising, at the same time, his lucrative art of a goldsmith. The Arians rejected Aetius with no less earnest indignation than the orthodox, but they could not escape being implicated, as it were, in his unpopularity; and the odious Anomeans, those who denied the *similitude* of the Son to the Father, brought new discredit even on the more temperate partisans of the Arian creed. Another heresiarch, of a higher rank, still further brought disrepute on the Arian party. Macedonius, the Bishop of Constantinople, to the Arian tenet of the inequality of the Son to the Father, added the total denial of the divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Of Macedonius.

Council still followed council. Though we may not concur with the Arian bishops in ascribing to their adversaries the whole blame of this perpetual tumult and confusion in the Christian world, caused by these incessant assemblages of the clergy, there must have been much melancholy truth in their state-

ment. "The East and the West are in a perpetual state of restlessness and disturbance. Deserting our spiritual charges; abandoning the people of God; neglecting the preaching of the Gospel; we are hurried about from place to place, sometimes to great distances, some of us infirm with age, with feeble constitutions or ill health, and are sometimes obliged to leave our sick brethren on the road. The whole administration of the empire, of the Emperor himself, the tribunes, and the commanders, at this fearful crisis of the state, are solely occupied with the lives and the condition of the bishops. The people are by no means unconcerned. The whole brotherhood watches in anxious suspense the event of these troubles; the establishment of post-horses is worn out by our journeyings; and all on account of a few wretches, who, if they had the least remaining sense of religion, would say with the Prophet Jonah, 'Take us up and cast us into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for we know that it is on our account that this great tempest is upon you.'"* CHAP. V.

The synod at Sirmium had no effect in reconciling the differences, or affirming the superiority of either party. A double council was appointed, of the Eastern prelates at Seleucia, of the Western at Rimini. The Arianism of the Emperor himself had by this time degenerated still farther from the creed of Nice. Eudoxus, who had espoused the Anomean doctrines of Aetius, ruled his untractable but passive mind. The council of Rimini con- Council of Rimini.

* Hilar. Oper. Hist. Fragm. xi. c. 25.

BOOK III.

sisted of at least 400 bishops, of whom not above eighty were Arians. Their resolutions were firm and peremptory. They repudiated the Arian doctrines; they expressed their rigid adherence to the formulary of Nice. Ten bishops, however, of each party, were deputed to communicate their decrees to Constantius. The ten Arians were received with the utmost respect, their rivals with every kind of slight and neglect. Insensibly they were admitted to more intimate intercourse; the flatteries, perhaps the bribes, of the Emperor prevailed; they returned, having signed a formulary directly opposed to their instructions. Their reception at first was unpromising; but by degrees the council, from which its firmest and most resolute members had gradually departed, and in which many poor and aged bishops still retained their seat, wearied, perplexed, worn out by the expense and discomfort of a long residence in a foreign city, consented to sign a creed in which the contested word, the homoousion, was carefully suppressed.* Arianism was thus deliberately adopted by a council, of which the authority was undisputed. The world, says Jerome, groaned to find itself Arian. But, on their return to their dioceses, the indignant prelates every where protested against the fraud and violence which had been practised

* It is curious enough, that the Latin language did not furnish terms to express this fine distinction. Some Western prelates, many of whom probably did not understand a word of Greek, proposed, "jam usiæ et homoousii nomina recedant quæ in divinis Scripturis de Deo, et Dei Filio, non inveniuntur scripta." Apud Hilarium, Oper. Hist. Fragm. ix.

against them. New persecutions followed: Gaudentius, Bishop of Rimini, lost his life.

The triumph of Arianism was far easier among the hundred and sixty bishops assembled at Seleucia. But it was more fatal to their cause: the Arians, and Semi-Arians, and Anomeans, mingled in tumultuous strife, and hurled mutual anathemas against each other. The new council met at Constantinople. By some strange political or religious vicissitude, the party of the Anomeans triumphed, while Aetius, its author, was sent into banishment.* Macedonius was deposed; Eudoxus of Antioch was translated to the imperial see; and the solemn dedication of the church of St. Sophia was celebrated by a prelate who denied the similitude of nature between the Father and the Son. The whole Christian world was in confusion; these fatal feuds penetrated almost as far as the Gospel itself had reached. The Emperor, whose alternately partial vehemence and subtlety had inflamed rather than allayed the tumult, found his authority set at nought; a deep, stern, and ineradicable resistance opposed the imperial decrees. A large portion of the empire proclaimed aloud that there were limits to the imperial despotism; that there was a higher allegiance, which superseded that due to the

* Aetius and Eunomius seem to have been the heroes of the historian Philostorgius, fragments of whose history have been preserved by the pious hostility of Photius. This diminishes our regret for the loss of the original work, which would be less curious than a genuine Arian history. Philostorgius seems to object to the anti-materialist view of the Deity maintained by the Semi-Arian Eusebius, and, according to him, by Arius himself. He reproaches Eusebius with asserting the Deity to be incomprehensible and inconceivable: ἄγνωστος καὶ ἀκατάληπτος. Lib. i. 2, 3.

BOOK III.

civil authority; that in affairs of religion they would not submit to the appointment of superiors who did not profess their views of Christian orthodoxy.* The Emperor himself, by mingling with almost fanatical passion and zeal in these controversies, at once lowered himself to the level of his subjects, and justified the importance which they attached to these questions. If Constantius had firmly, calmly, and consistently, enforced mutual toleration, — if he had set the example of Christian moderation and temper; if he had set his face solely against the stern refusal of Athanasius and his party to admit the Arians into communion, — he might, perhaps, have retained some influence over the contending parties. But he was not content without enforcing the dominance of the Arian party; he dignified Athanasius with the hatred of a personal enemy, almost of a rival; and his subjects, by his own apparent admission that these were questions of spiritual life and death, were compelled to postpone his decrees to those of God; to obey their bishops, who held the keys of heaven and hell, rather than Cæsar, who could only afflict them with civil disabilities, or penalties in this life.

* Hilary quotes the sentence of St. Paul. Ubi fides est, ibi et libertas est; in allusion to the Emperor's assuming the cognisance over religious questions. Oper. Hist. Fragm. i. c. 5.

CHAPTER VI.

JULIAN.

Amidst all this intestine strife within the pale of Christianity, and this conflict between the civil and religious authorities, concerning their respective limits, Paganism made a desperate effort to regain its lost supremacy. Julian has, perhaps, been somewhat unfairly branded with the ill-sounding name of Apostate. His Christianity was but the compulsory obedience of youth to the distasteful lessons of education, enforced by the hateful authority of a tyrannical relative. As early as the maturity of his reason, — at least as soon as he dared to reveal his secret sentiments, — he avowed his preference for the ancient Paganism.

The most astonishing part of Julian's history is the development and partial fulfilment of all his vast designs during a reign of less than two years. His own age wondered at the rapidity with which the young Emperor accomplished his military, civil, and religious schemes.* During his separate and subordinate command as

* Dicet aliquis: quomodo tam multa tam brevi tempore. Et rectè. Sed Imperator noster addit ad tempus quod otio suo detrahit. * * * Itaque grandævum jam imperium videbitur his, qui non ratione dierum et mensium, sed operum multitudine et effectarum rerum modo Juliani tempora metientur. Mamertini Grat. Actio. c. xiv.

BOOK III.

Cæsar, his time was fully occupied with his splendid campaigns upon the Rhine.* Julian was the vindicator of the old majesty of the empire; he threw back with a bold and successful effort the inroad of barbarism, which already threatened to overwhelm the Roman civilisation of Gaul. During the two unfinished years of his sole government, Julian had reunited the whole Roman empire under his single sceptre; he had reformed the army, the court, the tribunals of justice; he had promulgated many useful laws, which maintained their place in the jurisprudence of the empire; he had established peace on all the frontiers; he had organised a large and well-disciplined force to chastise the Persians for their aggressions on the eastern border, and by a formidable diversion within their own territories, to secure the Euphratic provinces against the most dangerous rival of the Roman power. During all these engrossing cares of empire, he devoted himself with the zeal and activity of a mere philosopher and man of letters to those more tranquil pursuits. The conqueror of the Franks and the antagonist of Sapor delivered lectures in the schools, and published works, which, whatever may be thought of their depth and truth, display no mean powers of composition: as a writer, Julian will compete with most of his age. Besides all this, his vast and restless spirit contemplated, and had already commenced, nothing less than a total change in the religion of the empire; not merely the restoration

Short reign of Julian. A. D. 361—363.

* Six years, from 355 to 361.

of Paganism to the legal supremacy which it possessed before the reign of Constantine, and the degradation of Christianity into a private sect; but the actual extirpation of the new religion from the minds of men by the reviving energies of a philosophic, and at the same time profoundly religious, Paganism.

Character of Julian.

The genius of ancient Rome and of ancient Greece might appear to revive in amicable union in the soul of Julian. The unmeasured military ambition, which turned the defensive into a war of aggression on all the imperilled frontiers; the broad and vigorous legislation; the unity of administration; the severer tone of manners, which belonged to the better days of Rome; the fine cultivation; the perspicuous philosophy; the lofty conceptions of moral greatness and purity, which distinguished the old Athenian. If the former (the Roman military enterprise), met eventually with the fate of Crassus or of Varus, rather than the glorious successes of Germanicus or Trajan, the times were more in fault than the general: if the latter (the Grecian elevation and elegance of mind) more resembled at times the affectation of the Sophist, and the coarseness of the Cynic, than the lofty views and exquisite harmony of Plato, or the practical wisdom of Socrates, the effete and exhausted state of Grecian letters and philosophy must likewise be taken into the account.

In the uncompleted two years of his sole empire*,

* One year, eight months, and twenty-three days. La Bleterie, Vie de Julien, p. 494.

BOOK III.

Julian had advanced so far in the restoration of the internal vigour and unity of administration, that it is doubtful how much further, but for the fatal Persian campaign, he might have fulfilled the visions of his noble ambition. He might have averted, at least for a time, the terrible calamities which burst upon the Roman world during the reign of Valentinian and Valens. But difficult and desperate as the enterprise might appear, the re-organisation of a decaying empire was less impracticable than the restoration of an extinguishing religion. A religion may awaken from indifference, and resume its dominion over the minds of men; but not, if supplanted by a new form of faith, which has identified itself with the opinions and sentiments of the general mind. It can never dethrone a successful invader, who has been recognised as a lawful sovereign. And Christianity (could the clear and sagacious mind of Julian be blind to this essential difference?) had occupied the whole soul of man with a fulness and confidence which belonged, and could belong, to no former religion. It had intimately blended together the highest truths of philosophy with the purest morality; the loftiest speculation with the most practical spirit. The vague theory of another life, timidly and dimly announced by the later Paganism, could ill compete with the deep and intense conviction, now rooted in the hearts of a large part of mankind by Christianity; the source in some of harrowing fears, in others of the noblest hopes.

Julian united in his own mind, and attempted to work into his new religion, the two incongruous

characters of a zealot for the older superstitions, and for the more modern philosophy of Greece. He had fused together, in that which appeared to him an harmonious system, Homer and Plato. He thought that the whole ritual of sacrifice would combine with that allegoric interpretation of the ancient mythology, which undeified the greater part of the Heathen Pantheon. All that Paganism had borrowed from Christianity, it had rendered comparatively cold and powerless. The one Supreme Deity was a name and an abstract conception, a metaphysical being. The visible representative of the Deity, the Sun, which was in general an essential part of the new system, was, after all, foreign and Oriental; it belonged to the genuine mythology neither of Greece nor Rome. The Theurgy, or awful and sublime communion of the mind with the spiritual world, was either too fine and fanciful for the vulgar belief, or associated, in the dim confusion of the popular conception, with that magic, against which the laws of Rome had protested with such stern solemnity; and which, therefore, however eagerly pursued, and reverenced with involuntary awe, was always associated with impressions of its unlawfulness and guilt. Christianity, on the other hand, had completely incorporated with itself all that it had admitted from Paganism, or which, if we may so speak, constituted the Pagan part of Christianity. The Heathen Theurgy, even in its purest form, its dreamy intercourse with the intermediate race of dæmons, was poor and ineffective, compared with the diabolic

BOOK III.

and angelic agency, which became more and more mingled up with Christianity. Where these subordinate dæmons were considered by the more philosophic Pagan to have been the older deities of the popular faith, it was rather a degradation of the ancient worship; where this was not the case, this fine perception of the spiritual world was the secret of the initiate few, rather than the all-pervading superstition of the many. The Christian dæmonology, on the other hand, which began to be heightened and multiplied by the fantastic imagination of the monks, brooding in their solitudes, seemed at least to grow naturally out of the religious system. The gradual darkening into superstition was altogether imperceptible, and harmonised entirely with the general feelings of the time. Christianity was a living plant, which imparted its vitality to the foreign suckers grafted upon it; the dead and sapless trunk of Paganism withered even the living boughs which were blended with it, by its own inevitable decay.

Unfavourable state of Christianity.

On the other hand, Christianity at no period could appear in a less amiable and attractive light to a mind preindisposed to its reception. It was in a state of universal fierce and implacable discord: the chief cities of the empire had run with blood shed in religious quarrels. The sole object of the conflicting parties seemed to be to confine to themselves the temporal and spiritual blessings of the faith; to exclude as many as they might from that eternal life, and to anathematise to that eternal death, which were revealed by the Gospel, and placed, according to

the general belief, under the special authority of the clergy. Society seemed to be split up into irreconcileable parties; to the animosities of Pagan and Christian, were now added those of Christian and Christian. Christianity had passed through its earlier period of noble moral enthusiasm; of the energy with which it addressed its first proclamation of its doctrines to man; of the dignity with which it stood aloof from the intrigues and vices of the world; and of its admirable constancy under persecution. It had not fully attained its second state as a religion generally established in the minds of men, by a dominant hierarchy of unquestioned authority. Its great truths had no longer the striking charm of novelty; nor were they yet universally and profoundly implanted in the general mind by hereditary transmission, or early education, and ratified by the unquestioning sanction of ages.

The early education of Julian had been, it might almost appear, studiously and skilfully conducted, so as to show the brighter side of Paganism, the darker of Christianity. His infant years had been clouded by the murder of his father. How far his mind might retain any impression of this awful event, or remembrance of the place of his refuge, the Christian church, or the saviour of his life, the virtuous Bishop of Arethusa, it is of course impossible to conjecture. But his first instructor was a man who, born a Scythian, and educated in Greece*, united the severe morality of his ruder ancestors

* His name was Mardonius. Socrat. E. H. iii. 1. Amm. Marc. xxii 12. Julian. ad Athen. et Misopogon.

BOOK III.

with the elegance of Grecian accomplishments. He enforced upon his young pupil the strictest modesty, contempt for the licentious or frivolous pleasures of youth, the theatre and the bath. At the same time, while he delighted his mind with the poetry of Homer, his graver studies were the Greek and Latin languages, the elements of the philosophy of Greece, and music, that original and attractive element of Grecian education.* At the age of about fourteen or fifteen, Julian was shut up, with his brother Gallus, in Macellæ, a fortress in Asia Minor, and committed in this sort of honourable prison to the rigid superintendence of ecclesiastics. By his Christian instructors, the young and ardent Julian was bound down to a course of the strictest observances; the midnight vigil, the fast, the long and weary prayer, and visits to the tombs of martyrs, rather than a wise and rational initiation in the genuine principles of the Gospel; or a judicious familiarity with the originality, the beauty, and the depth of the Christian morals and Christian religion. He was taught the virtue of implicit submission to his ecclesiastical superiors; the munificence of conferring gifts upon the churches; with his brother Gallus he was permitted, or rather incited, to build a chapel over the tomb of St. Mammas.† For six years,

Education of Julian.

* See the high character of this man in the Misopogon, p. 351.

† Julian is said even thus early to have betrayed his secret inclinations; in his declamations he took delight in defending the cause of Paganism against Christianity. A prophetic miracle foreboded his future course. While this church rose expeditiously under the labour of Gallus, the obstinate stones would not obey that of Julian; an invisible hand disturbed the foundations, and

he bitterly asserts, that he was deprived of every kind of useful instruction.* Julian and his brother, it is even said, were ordained readers, and officiated in public in that character. But the passages of the sacred writings, with which he might thus have become acquainted, were imposed as lessons; and in the mind of Julian, Christianity, thus taught and enforced, was inseparably connected with the irksome and distasteful feelings of confinement and degradation. No youths of his own rank, or of ingenuous birth, were permitted to visit his prison; he was reduced, as he indignantly declares, to the debasing society of slaves.

At the age of twenty, Julian was permitted to reside in Constantinople, afterwards at Nicomedia. The jealousy of Constantius was excited by the popular demeanour, sober manners, and the reputation for talents, which directed all eyes towards his youthful nephew. He dismissed him to the more dangerous and fatal residence in Nicomedia, in the neighbourhood of the most celebrated and most attractive of the Pagan party. The most faithful adherents of Paganism were that class with which the tastes and inclinations of Julian brought him into close intimacy; the sophists, the men of letters, the rhetoricians, the poets, the philosophers. He was forbidden, indeed, perhaps by the jealousy of his appointed instructor Ecebolus, who at this time conformed to the religion of the court, to hear the

threw down all his work. Gregory Nazianzen declares that he had heard this from eye-witnesses; Sozomen, from those who had heard it from eye-witnesses. Gregor. Or. iii. p. 59. 61. Sozomen, v. 2.

* *Πάντος μαθήματος σπουδαίου.*

BOOK III.

Intercourse with the philosophers.

dangerous lectures of Libanius, equally celebrated for his eloquence and his ardent attachment to the old religion. But Julian obtained his writings, which he devoured with all the delight of a stolen enjoyment.* He formed an intimate acquaintance with the heads of the philosophic school, with Ædesius, his pupils Eusebius and Chrysanthius, and at last with the famous Maximus. These men are accused of practising the most subtle and insidious arts upon the character of their ardent and youthful votary. His grave and meditative mind imbibed with eager delight the solemn mysticism of their tenets, which were impressed more deeply by significant and awful ceremonies. A magician at Nicomedia first excited his curiosity, and tempted him to enter on these exciting courses. At Pergamus he visited the aged Ædesius; and the manner in which these philosophers passed Julian onward from one to another, as if through successive stages of initiation in their mysterious doctrines, bears the appearance of a deliberate scheme to work him up to their purposes. The aged Ædesius addressed him as the favoured child of wisdom; declined the important charge of his instruction, but commended him to his pupils, Eusebius and Chrysanthius, who could unlock the inexhaustible source of light and wisdom. "If you should attain the supreme felicity of being initiated in their mysteries, you will blush to have been born a man, you will no longer endure the name." The pupils of Ædesius fed the greedy mind of the proselyte with all their stores of wisdom, and then skilfully unfolded the greater fame of Maximus.

* Liban. Orat. Par. t. i. p. 526.

CHAP. VI.

Eusebius professed to despise the vulgar arts of wonder-working, at least in comparison with the purification of the soul; but he described the power of Maximus in terms to which Julian could not listen without awe and wonder. Maximus had led them into the temple of Hecate; he had burned a few grains of incense, he had murmured a hymn, and the statue of the goddess was seen to smile. They were awe-struck, but Maximus declared that this was nothing. The lamps throughout the temple shall immediately burst into light: as he spoke, they kindled and blazed up. "But of these mystical wonder-workers, we think lightly," proceeded the skilful speaker, "do thou, like us, think only of the internal purification of the reason." "Keep to your book," broke out the impatient youth, "this is the man I seek." * He hastened to Ephesus. The person and demeanour of Maximus were well suited to keep up the illusion. He was a venerable man, with a long white beard, with keen eyes, great activity, soft and persuasive voice, rapid and fluent eloquence. By Maximus, who summoned Chrysanthius to him, Julian was brought into direct communion with the invisible world. The faithful and officious Genii from this time watched over Julian in peace and war; they conversed with him in his slumbers, they warned him of dangers, they conducted his military operations. Thus far we proceed on the authority of Pagan writers; the scene of his solemn initiation rests on the more doubtful testimony of Christian historians†, which, as

* Eunapius, in Vit. Ædesii et Maximi.

† Greg. Naz. Orat. iii. 71. Theodoret. iii. 3.

BOOK III.

they were little likely to be admitted into the secrets of these dark and hidden rites, is to be received with grave suspicion, more especially as they do not scruple to embellish them with Christian miracle. Julian was led first into a temple, then into a subterranean crypt, in almost total darkness. The evocations were made; wild and terrible sounds were heard; spectres of fire jibbered around. Julian, in his sudden terror, made the sign of the cross. All disappeared, all was silent. Twice this took place, and Julian could not but express to Maximus his astonishment at the power of this sign. "The gods," returned the dexterous philosopher, "will have no communion with so profane a worshipper." From this time, it is said, on better authority*, that Julian burst, like a lion in his wrath, the slender ties which bound him to Christianity. But he was still constrained to dissemble his secret apostasy. His enemies declared that he redoubled his outward zeal for Christianity, and even shaved his head in conformity with the monastic practice. His brother Gallus had some suspicion of his secret views, and sent the Arian bishop Aetius to confirm him in the faith.

Conduct of Constantius to Julian.

How far Julian, in this time of danger, stooped to disguise his real sentiments, it were rash to decide. But it would by no means commend Christianity to the respect and attachment of Julian, that it was the religion of his imperial relative. Popular rumour did not acquit Constantius of the murder of Julian's father; and Julian himself afterwards publicly avowed his be-

* Libanius.

lief in this crime.* He had probably owed his own escape to his infant age and the activity of his friends. Up to this time, his life had been the precarious and permissive boon of a jealous tyrant, who had inflicted on him every kind of degrading restraint. His place of education had been a prison, and his subsequent liberty watched with suspicious vigilance. The personal religion of Constantius; his embarking with alternate violence and subtlety in theological disputations; his vacillation between timid submission to priestly authority and angry persecution, were not likely to make a favourable impression on a wavering mind. The Pagans themselves, if we may take the best historian of the time as the representative of their opinions †, considered that Constantius dishonoured the Christian religion by mingling up its perspicuous simplicity with anile superstition. If there was little genuine Christianity in the theological discussions of Constantius, there had been less of its beautiful practical spirit in his conduct to Julian. It had allayed no jealousy, mitigated no hatred; it had not restrained his temper from overbearing tyranny, nor kept his hands clean from blood. And now, the death of his brother Gallus, to whom he seems to have cherished warm attachment, was a new evidence of the capricious and unhumanised tyranny of Constantius, a fearful omen of the uncertainty of his own life under such a despotism. He had beheld the advancement and the fate of his brother; and his future destiny presented the alternative either of ignomi-

* Ad Senatum Populumque Atheniensem. Julian. Oper. p. 270.

† Ammianus Marcellinus.

BOOK III.

nious obscurity or fatal distinction. His life was spared only through the casual interference of the humane and enlightened Empress; and her influence gained but a slow and difficult triumph over the malignant eunuchs, who ruled the mind of Constantius. But he had been exposed to the ignominy of arrest and imprisonment, and a fearful suspense of seven weary months.* His motions, his words, were watched; his very heart scrutinised; he was obliged to suppress the natural emotions of grief for the death of his brother; to impose silence on his fluent eloquence; and act the hypocrite to nature as well as to religion. His retreat was Athens, of all cities in the empire that, probably, in which Paganism still maintained the highest ascendancy, and appeared in the most attractive form. The political religion of Rome had its stronghold in the capital; that of Greece, in the centre of intellectual culture and of the fine arts. Athens might still be considered the university of the empire; from all quarters, particularly of the East, young men of talent and promise crowded to complete their studies in those arts of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, which, however, by no means disdained by the Christians, might still be considered as more strictly attached to the Pagan interest.

Julian at Athens.

Among the Christian students who at this time paid the homage of their residence to this great centre of intellectual culture, were Basil and Gregory of Nazianzum. The latter, in the orations with which in later times he condemned the memory

* Ἐμὲ δὲ ἀφῆκε μόγις, ἑπτὰ μηνῶν ὅλων ἑλκύσας τῇδε κἀκεῖσε. Ad. S. P. Ath. p. 272.

of Julian, has drawn, with a coarse and unfriendly hand, the picture of his person and manners. His manners did injustice to the natural beauties of his person, and betrayed his restless, inquisitive, and somewhat incoherent, character. The Christian (we must remember, indeed, that these predictions were published subsequent to their fulfilment, and that, by their own account, Julian had already betrayed, in Asia Minor, his secret propensities) already discerned in the unquiet and unsubmissive spirit, the future apostate. But the general impression which Julian made was far more favourable. His quickness, his accomplishments, the variety and extent of his information; his gentleness, his eloquence, and even his modesty, gained universal admiration, and strengthened the interest excited by his forlorn and perilous position.

Julian initiated at Eleusis.

Of all existing Pagan rites, those which still maintained the greatest respect, and would impress a mind like Julian's with the profoundest veneration, were the Eleusinian mysteries. They united the sanctity of almost immemorial age with some similitude to the Platonic Paganism of the day, at least sufficient for the ardent votaries of the latter to claim their alliance. The Hierophant of Eleusis was admitted to be the most potent theurgist in the world.* Julian honoured him, or was honoured by his intimacy; and the initiation in the Mystery of those, emphatically called the Goddesses, with all its appalling dramatic ma-

* Compare (in Eunap. Vit. Ædes. p. 52., edit. Boissonade) the prophecy of the dissolution of Paganism ascribed to this pontiff; a prediction which may do credit to the sagacity, or evince the apprehensions of the seer, but will by no means claim the honour of divine foreknowledge.

BOOK III.

chinery, and its high speculative and imaginative doctrines, the impenetrable, the ineffable tenets of the sanctuary, consummated the work of Julian's conversion.

Elevation of Julian to the rank of Cæsar.

The elevation of Julian to the rank of Cæsar was at length extorted from the necessities, rather than freely bestowed by the love, of the Emperor. Nor did the jealous hostility of Constantius cease with this apparent reconciliation. Constantius, with cold suspicion, thwarted all his measures, crippled his resources, and appropriated to himself, with unblushing injustice, the fame of his victories.* Julian's assumption of the purple, whether forced upon him by the ungovernable attachment of his soldiery, or prepared by his own subtle ambition, was justified, and perhaps compelled, by the base ingratitude of Constantius; and by his manifest, if not avowed, resolution of preparing the ruin of Julian, by removing his best troops to the East. †

Death of Constantius.

The timely death of Constantius alone prevented the deadly warfare in which the last of the race of Constantine were about to contest the empire. The dying bequest of that empire to Julian, said to have been made by the penitent Constantius, could not efface the recollection of those long years of degradation, of jealousy, of avowed or secret hostility; still less could it allay the dislike or con-

* Ammianus, l. xv. 8. et seqq. Socrates, iii. 1. Sozomen, v. n. La Bleterie, Vie de Julien, 89. et seqq. The campaigns of Julian, in La Bleterie, lib. ii. Gibbon, iv. pp. 1. 4.

The well-known passage in Ammianus shows the real sentiments of the court towards Julian. In odium venit cum victoriis suis capella non homo; ut hirsutum Julianum carpentes appellantesque loquacem talpam, et purpuratam simiam, et litterionem Græcum. Amm. Marc. xvii. 11.

† Amm. Marc. xx. &c. Zosimus, iii. Liban. Or. x. Jul. ad S. P. Q. A.

tempt of Julian for his weak and insolent predecessor, who, governed by eunuchs, wasted the precious time which ought to have been devoted to the cares of the empire, in idle theological discussions, or quarrels with contending ecclesiastics. The part in the character of the deceased Emperor least likely to find favour in the sight of his successor Julian was his religion. The unchristian Christianity of Constantius must bear some part of the guilt of Julian's apostasy.

Conduct of Julian.

Up to the time of his revolt against Constantius, Julian had respected the dominant Christianity. The religious acts of his early youth, performed in obedience, or under the influence of his instructors; or his submissive conformity, when his watchful enemies were eager for his life, ought hardly to convict him of deliberate hypocrisy. In Gaul, still under the strictest suspicion, and engaged in almost incessant warfare, he would have few opportunities to betray his secret sentiments. But Jupiter was consulted in his private chamber, and sanctioned his assumption of the imperial purple.* And no sooner had he marched into Illyria, an independent Emperor, at the head of his own army, than he threw aside all concealment, and proclaimed himself a worshipper of the ancient gods of Paganism. The auspices were taken, and the act of divination was not the less held in honour, because the fortunate soothsayer announced the death of Constantius. The army followed the example of their victorious general. At his command, the neglected temples

* Amm. xxi. 1.

BOOK III.

resumed their ceremonies; he adorned them with offerings; he set the example of costly sacrifices.* The Athenians in particular obeyed with alacrity the commands of the new Emperor; the honours of the priesthood became again a worthy object of contest; two distinguished females claimed the honour of representing the genuine Eumolpidæ, and of officiating in the Parthenon. Julian, already anxious to infuse as much of the real Christian spirit, as he could, into reviving Paganism, exhorted the contending parties to peace and unity, as the most acceptable sacrifice to the gods.

The death of Constantius left the whole Roman world open to the civil and religious schemes which lay, floating and unformed, before the imagination of Julian. The civil reforms were executed with necessary severity; but in some instances, with more than necessary cruelty. The elevation of Paganism into a rational and effective faith, and the depression, and even the eventual extinction of Christianity, were the manifest objects of Julian's religious policy. Julian's religion was the eclectic Paganism of the new Platonic philosophy. The chief speculative tenet was Oriental rather than Greek or Roman. The one immaterial inconceivable Father dwelt alone; though his majesty was held in reverence, the direct and material object of worship was the great Sun †, the living

* The Western army was more easily practised upon than the Eastern soldiers at a subsequent period. Θρησκεύομεν τοὺς Θεοὺς ἀναφανδὸν καὶ τὸ πλήθος τοῦ συγκατέλθοντος μοι στρατοπέδου θεοσεβὲς ἐστιν. Epist. xxxviii.

† Τὸν μέγαν Ἥλιον, τὸ ζῶν ἄγαλμα καὶ ἔμψυχον, καὶ εὔνουν καὶ ἀγαθοεργὸν, τοῦ νοήτου πάτρος.

and animated, and propitious and beneficent image of the immaterial Father.* Below this primal Deity and his glorious image, there was room for the whole Pantheon of subordinate deities, of whom, in like manner, the stars were the material representatives; but who possessed invisible powers, and manifested themselves in various ways, in dreams and visions, through prodigies and oracles, the flights of birds, and the signs in the sacrificial victims.† This vague and comprehensive Paganism might conclude under its dominion all classes and nations which adhered to the Heathen worship; the Oriental, the Greek, the Roman, even, perhaps, the Northern barbarian, would not refuse to admit the simplicity of the primal article of the creed, spreading out as it did below into the boundless latitude of Polytheism. The immortality of the soul appears to follow as an inference from some of Julian's Platonic doctrines‡; but it is remarkable how rarely it is put forward as an important point of difference in his religious writings, while, in his private correspondence, he falls back to the dubious and hesitating language of the ancient Heathens: "I am not one of those who disbelieve

* Compare Julian. apud Cyril, lib. ii. p. 65.

† Julian asserts the various offices of the subordinate deities, apud Cyril., lib. vii. p. 235.

One of the most remarkable illustrations of this wide-spread worship of the sun is to be found in the address of Julius Firmicus Maternus to the Emperors Constantius and Constans. He introduces the sun as remonstrating against the dishonourable honours thus heaped upon him, and protests against being responsible for the acts, or involved in the fate, of Liber, Attys, or Osiris. Nolo ut errori vestro nomen meum fomenta suppeditet. * * Quicquid sum simpliciter Deo pareo, nec aliud volo de me intelligatis, nisi quod videtis. c. 8.

‡ Lib. ii. 58.

BOOK III.

the immortality of the soul; but the gods alone can know; man can only conjecture that secret* :" but his best consolation on the loss of friends was the saying of the Grecian philosopher to Darius, that if he would find three persons who had not suffered the like calamities, he would restore his beautiful wife to life.† His dying language, however, though still vague, and allied to the old Pantheistic system, sounds more like serene confidence in some future state of being.

Restoration of Paganism.

The first care of Julian was to restore the outward form of Paganism to its former splendour, and to infuse the vigour of reviving youth into the antiquated system. The temples were every where to be restored to their ancient magnificence; the municipalities were charged with the expense of these costly renovations. Where they had been destroyed by the zeal of the Christians, large fines were levied on the communities, and became, as will hereafter appear, a pretext for grinding exaction, and sometimes cruel persecution. It assessed on the whole community the penalty, merited, perhaps, only by the rashness of a few zealots; it revived outrages almost forgotten, and injuries perpetrated, perhaps, with the sanction, unquestionably with the connivance, of the former government. In many instances, it may have revenged on the innocent and peaceful, the crimes of the avaricious and irreligious, who either plundered under the

* Οὐ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν τῶν πεπεισμένων τὰς ψυχὰς ἤτοι προαπόλλυσθαι τῶν σωμάτων ἢ συναπόλλυσθαι. * * Ὡς τοῖς μὲν ἀνθρώποις ἁρμόζει περὶ τοιούτων εἰκάζειν, ἐπίστασθαι δὲ αὐτὰ τοὺς θεοὺς ἀνάγκη. Epist. lxiii. p. 452.

† Epistle to Amerius on the loss of his wife. Ep. xxxvii. p. 412.

mask of Christian zeal, or seized the opportunity, when the zeal of others might secure their impunity. That which takes place in all religious revolutions, had occurred to a considerable extent: the powerful had seized the opportunity of plundering the weaker party for their own advantage. The eunuchs and favourites of the court had fattened on the spoil of the temples.* If these men had been forced to regorge their ill-gotten gains, justice might have approved the measure, but their crimes were unfairly visited on the whole Christian body. The extent to which the ruin and spoliation of the temples had been carried in the East, may be estimated from the tragic lamentations of Libanius. The soul of Julian, according to the orator, burned for empire, in order to restore the ancient order of things.

In some respects, the success of Julian answered the high-wrought expectations of his partisans. His panegyrist indulges in this lofty language. "Thou, then, I say, O mightiest Emperor, hast restored to the republic the expelled and banished virtues; thou hast rekindled the study of letters; thou hast not only delivered from her trial Philosophy, suspected heretofore and deprived of her honours, and even arraigned as a criminal, but hast clothed her in purple, crowned her with jewels, and seated her on the imperial throne. We may now look on the heavens, and contemplate the stars with fearless gaze,

* Pasti templorum spoliis, is the strong expression of Ammianus. Libanius says, that some persons had built themselves houses from the materials of the temples. Χρήματα δὲ ἐτέλουν οἱ τοῖς τῶν ἱερῶν λίθοις σφίσιν αὐτοῖς οἰκίας ἐγείροντες. Orat. Parent. p. 504.

BOOK III.

who, a short time ago, like the beasts of the field, fixed our downward and grovelling vision on the earth."* "First of all," says Libanius, "he re-established the exiled religion, building, restoring, embellishing the temples. Everywhere were altars and fires, and the blood and fat of sacrifice, and smoke, and sacred rites, and diviners, fearlessly performing their functions. And on the tops of mountains were pipings and processions, and the sacrificial ox, which was at once an offering to the gods and a banquet to men."† The private temple in the palace of Julian, in which he worshipped daily, was sacred to the Sun; but he founded altars to all the gods. He looked with especial favour on those cities which had retained their temples, with abhorrence on those which had suffered them to be destroyed, or to fall to ruin.‡

Julian so entirely misapprehended Christianity, as to attribute its success and influence to its internal organisation, rather than to its internal authority over the soul of man. He thought that the religion grew out of the sacerdotal power, not that the sacerdotal power was but the vigorous development of the religion. He fondly supposed that the imperial edict, and the authority of the government, could supply the place of profound religious sentiment, and transform the whole Pagan priesthood, whether attached to the dissolute worship of the East, the elegant ceremonial of Greece,

* Mam. Grat. Act. c. xxiii. This clause refers, no doubt, to astrology and divination.

† See v. 1. p. 529. one among many passages; likewise, the Oratio pro Templis, and the Monodia.

‡ Orat. Parent. p. 564.

or the graver ritual of Rome, into a serious, highly moral, and blameless hierarchy. The Emperor was to be at once the supreme head, and the model of this new sacerdotal order. The sagacious mind of Julian might have perceived the dangerous power, growing up in the Christian episcopate, which had already encroached upon the imperial authority, and began to divide the allegiance of the world. His political apprehensions may have concurred with his religious animosities, in not merely endeavouring to check the increase of this power, but in desiring to concentrate again in the imperial person both branches of authority. The supreme pontificate of Paganism had indeed passed quietly down with the rest of the imperial titles and functions. But the interference of the Christian emperors in ecclesiastical affairs had been met with resistance, obeyed only with sullen reluctance, or but in deference to the strong arm of power. The doubtful issue of the conflict between the Emperor and his religious antagonist might awaken reasonable alarm for the majesty of the empire. If, on the other hand, Julian should succeed in reorganising the Pagan priesthood in efficiency, respect, and that moral superiority which now belonged to the Christian ecclesiastical system, the supreme pontificate, instead of being a mere appellation, or an appendage to the imperial title, would be an office of unlimited influence and authority.* The Emperor

* See the curious fragment of the sixty-second epistle, p. 450, in which Julian asserts his supremacy not merely as Pontifex Maximus, but as holding a high rank among the worshippers of Cybele. Ἐγὼ τοίνον ἐπειδὴ πὲρ εἰμι κατὰ μὲν τὰ πάτρια μεγὰς Ἀρχιερέυς, ἔλαχον δὲ νῦν καὶ τοῦ Διδυμαίου προφητεόειν.

BOOK III.

Julian's new priesthood.

would be the undisputed and unrivalled head of the religion of the empire; the whole sacerdotal order would be at his command; Paganism, instead of being, as heretofore, a confederacy of different religions, an aggregate of local systems of worship, each under its own tutelar deity, would become a well-regulated monarchy, with its provincial, civic, and village priesthoods, acknowledging the supremacy, and obeying the impulse, of the high imperial functionary. Julian admitted the distinction between the priest and the laity.* In every province a supreme pontiff was to be appointed, charged with a superintendence over the conduct of the inferior priesthood, and armed with authority to suspend or to depose those who should be guilty of any indecent irregularity. The whole priesthood were to be sober, chaste, temperate in all things. They were to abstain, not merely from loose society, but, in a spirit diametrically opposite to the old religion, were rarely to be seen at public festivals, never where women mingled in them.† In private houses, they were only to be present at the moderate banquets of the virtuous; they were never to be seen drinking in taverns, or exercising any base or sordid trade. The priesthood were to stand aloof from society, and only mingle with it to infuse their own grave decency, and unimpeachable moral tone. The theatre, that second temple, as it might be called, of the older religion, was sternly

* Ἐπὶ σοὶ ποῦ μέτεστιν ἐμπείρίας (ὅλως) τῶν δικαίων, ὃς οὐκ οἶσθα τί μὲν ἱερεύς, τί δὲ ἰδιώτης. Fragm. Epist. lxii.

† See Epist. xlix.

proscribed; so entirely was it considered sunk from its high religious character, so incapable of being restored to its old moral influence. They were to avoid all books, poetry, or tales, which might inflame their passions; to abstain altogether from those philosophical writings which subverted the foundations of religious belief, those of the Pyrrhonists and Epicureans, which Julian asserts had happily fallen into complete neglect, and had almost become obsolete. They were to be diligent and liberal in almsgiving, and to exercise hospitality on the most generous scale. The Jews had no beggars, the Christians maintained, indiscriminately, all applicants to their charity; it was a disgrace to the Pagans to be inattentive to such duties; and the authority of Homer is alleged to show the prodigal hospitality of the older Greeks. They were to establish houses of reception for strangers in every city, and thus to rival or surpass the generosity of the Christians. Supplies of corn from the public granaries were assigned for these purposes, and placed at the disposal of the priests, partly for the maintenance of their attendants, partly for these pious uses. They were to pay great regard to the burial of the dead, a subject on which Grecian feeling had always been peculiarly sensitive, particularly of strangers. The benevolent institutions of Christianity were to be imitated and associated to Paganism. A tax was to be levied in every province for the maintenance of the poor, and distributed by the priesthood. Hospitals for the sick and for indigent strangers of

His charitable institutions

imitated from Christianity.

BOOK III.

every creed were to be formed in convenient places. The Christians, not without justice, called the Emperor "the ape of Christianity." Of all homage to the Gospel, this was the most impressive and sincere; and we are astonished at the blindness of Julian in not perceiving that these changes, which thus enforced his admiration, were the genuine and permanent results of the religion; but the disputes, and strifes, and persecutions, the accidental and temporary effects of human passions, awakened by this new and violent impulse on the human mind.

Ritual.

Something like an universal ritual formed part of the design of Julian. Three times a day prayer was to be publicly offered in the temples. The powerful aid of music, so essential a part of the older and better Grecian instruction, and of which the influence is so elevating to the soul *, was called in to impress the minds of the worshippers. Each temple was to have its organised band of choristers. A regular system of alternate chanting was introduced. It would be curious, if it were possible, to ascertain whether the Grecian temples received back their own music and their alternately responding chorus from the Christian churches.

Respect for temples.

Julian would invest the Pagan priesthood in that respect, or rather that commanding majesty, with which the profound reverence of the Christian world arrayed their hierarchy. Solemn silence was to reign in the temples. All persons in authority were to leave their guards at the door when they entered the hallowed precincts. The Emperor

* On Music. See Epist. lvi.

himself forbade the usual acclamations on his entrance into the presence of the gods. Directly he touched the sacred threshold, he became a private man.

Religious instruction.

It is said that he meditated a complete course of religious instruction. Schoolmasters, catechists, preachers, were to teach, — are we to suppose the Platonic philosophy? — as a part of the religion. A penitential form was to be drawn up for the readmission of transgressors into the fold. Instead of throwing open the temples to the free and promiscuous reception of apostatising Christians, the value of the privilege was to be enhanced by the difficulty of attaining it.* They were to be slowly admitted to the distinction of rational believers in the gods. The dii averruncatores (atoning deities) were to be propitiated; they were to pass through different degrees of initiation. Prayers, expiations, lustrations, severe trials, could alone purify their bodies and their minds, and make them worthy participants in the Pagan mysteries.

Animal sacrifices.

But Julian was not content with this moral regeneration of Paganism; he attempted to bring back the public mind to all the sanguinary ritual of sacrifice, to which the general sentiment had been gradually growing unfamiliar and repugnant. The time was passed when men could consider the favour of the gods propitiated according to the number of slaughtered beasts. The philosophers must have smiled in secret over the superstition of the philosophic Emperor. Julian himself washed

* See Epist. lii.

BOOK III.

off his Christian baptism by the new Oriental rite of aspersion by blood, the Taurobolia or Kriobolia of the Mithriac mysteries* ; he was regenerated anew to Paganism.† This indeed was a secret ceremony ; but Julian was perpetually seen, himself wielding the sacrificial knife, and exploring with his own hands the reeking entrails of the victims, to learn the secrets of futurity. The enormous expenditure lavished on the sacrifices, the hecatombs of cattle, the choice birds from all quarters, drained the revenue.‡ The Western soldiers, especially the intemperate Gauls, indulged in the feasts of the victims to such excess, and mingled them with such copious libations of wine, as to be carried to their tents amid the groans and mockeries of the more sober.§ The gifts to diviners, soothsayers, and imposters of all classes, offended equally the more wise and rational. In the public, as well as private, conduct of Julian, there was a Heathen Pharisaism, an attention to minute and trifling observances, which could not but excite contempt even in the more enlightened of his own party. Every morning and evening he offered sacrifice to the sun ; he rose at night to offer the same homage to the moon and stars. Every day brought the rite of some other god ; he was constantly seen prostrate

* Gregor. Naz. iii. p. 70.

† The person initiated descended into a pit or trench, and through a kind of sieve, or stone pierced with holes, the blood of the bull or the ram was poured over his whole person.

‡ Julian acknowledges the reluctance to sacrifice in many parts. "Show me," he says, to the philosopher Aristomenes, "a genuine Greek in Cappadocia." Τέως γὰρ τοὺς μὲν οὐ βουλομένους, ὀλίγους δὲ τινας ἐθέλοντας μὲν, οὐκ εἰδότας δὲ θύειν, ὁρῶ. Epist. iv. p. 375.

§ I do not believe the story of human sacrifices in Alexandria and Athens, Socrat. E. H. iii. 13.

before the image of the deity, busying himself about the ceremony, performing the menial offices of cleansing the wood, and kindling the fire with his own breath, till the victim was ready for the imperial hands.* CHAP. VI.

Instead of the Christian hierarchy, Julian hastened to environ himself with the most distinguished of the Heathen philosophers. Most of these, indeed, pretended to be a kind of priesthood. Intercessors between the deities and the world of man, they wrought miracles, foresaw future events; they possessed the art of purifying the soul, so that it should be reunited to the Primal Spirit: the Divinity dwelt within them. Philosophers.

The obscurity of the names which Julian thus set up to rival in popular estimation an Athanasius or a Gregory of Nazianzum, is not altogether to be ascribed to the final success of Christianity. The impartial verdict of posterity can scarcely award to these men a higher appellation than that of sophists and rhetoricians. The subtlety and ingenuity of these more imaginative, perhaps, but far less profound, *schoolmen* of Paganism, were wasted on idle reveries, on solemn trifling, and questions which it was alike useless to agitate, and impossible to solve. The hand of death was alike upon the religion, the philosophy, the eloquence, of Greece; and the temporary movement which Julian excited was but a feeble quivering, a last impotent struggle, preparatory to total disso-

* Innumeros sine parsimoniâ mactans; ut crederetur, si revertisset de Parthis, boves jam defecturos. Amn. Marc. xxv. 4.

BOOK III.

lution. Maximus appears, in his own time, to have been the most eminent of his class. The writings of Libanius and of Iamblichus alone survive, to any extent, the general wreck of the later Grecian literature. The genius and the language of Plato were alike wanting in his degenerate disciples. Julian himself is, perhaps, the best, because the plainest and most perspicuous, writer of his time: and the "Cæsars" may rank as no unsuccessful attempt at satiric irony.

Maximus.

Maximus was the most famous of the school. He had been among the early instructors of Julian. The Emperor had scarcely assumed the throne, when he wrote to Maximus in the most urgent and flattering terms: life was not life without him.* Maximus obeyed the summons. On his journey through Asia Minor, the cities vied with each other in doing honour to the champion of Paganism. When the Emperor heard of his arrival in Constantinople, though engaged in an important public ceremonial, he broke it off at once, and hastened to welcome his philosophic guest. The roads to the metropolis were crowded with sophists, hurrying to bask in the sunshine of imperial favour.† The privilege of travelling at the public cost, by the posting establishment of the empire, so much abused by Constantius in favour of the bishops, was now conceded to some

* Epist. xv. The nameless person to whom the first epistle is addressed is declared superior to Pythagoras or Plato. Epist. i. p. 372.

† The severe and grave Priscus despised the youths who embraced philosophy as a fashion. Κορυβαντιώντων ἐπὶ σοφίᾳ μειρακίων. Vit. Prisc. apud Eunap., ed. Boisson, p. 67.

of the philosophers. Chrysanthius, another sophist of great reputation, was more modest and more prudent; he declined the dazzling honour, and preferred the philosophic quiet of his native town. Julian appointed him, with his wife, to the high-priesthood of Lydia; and Chrysanthius, with the prophetic discernment of worldly wisdom, kept on amicable terms with the Christians. Of Libanius, Julian writes in rapturous admiration. Iamblichus had united all that was excellent in the ancient philosophy and poetry; Pindar, Democritus, and Orpheus, were blended in his perfect and harmonious syncretism.* The wisdom of Iamblichus so much dazzled and overawed the Emperor that he dared not intrude too much of his correspondence on the awful sage. "One of his letters surpassed in value all the gold of Lydia." The influence of men over their own age may in general be estimated by the language of contemporary writers. The admiration they excite is the test of their power, at least with their own party. The idolatry of the philosophers is confined to the few initiate; and even with their own party, the philosophers disappointed the high expectations which they had excited of their dignified superiority to the baser interests and weaknesses of mankind. They were by no means proof against the intoxication of court favour; they betrayed their vanity, their love of pleasure. Maximus himself is accused of assuming the pomp and inso-

* Epist. xv.

BOOK III.

lence of a favourite; the discarded eunuchs had been replaced, it was feared, by a new, not less intriguing or more disinterested, race of courtiers.

Toleration of Julian.

To the Christians, Julian assumed the language of the most liberal toleration. His favourite orator thus describes his policy. "He thought that neither fire nor sword could change the faith of mankind; the heart disowns the hand which is compelled by terror to sacrifice. Persecutions only make hypocrites, who are unbelievers throughout life, or martyrs, honoured after death.* He strictly prohibited the putting to death the Galileans (his favourite appellation of the Christians), as worthy rather of compassion than of hatred.† "Leave them to punish themselves, poor, blind, and misguided beings, who abandon the most glorious privilege of mankind, the adoration of the immortal gods, to worship the mouldering remains and bones of the dead."‡ He did not perceive that it was now too late to reassume the old Roman contempt for the obscure and foreign religion. Christianity had sate on the throne; and disdain now sounded like mortified pride. And the language, even the edicts, of the Emperor, under the smooth mask of gentleness and pity, betrayed the bitterness of hostility. His conduct was a perpetual sarcasm. It was the interest of Paganism

* Liban. Orat. Parent. v. i. p. 562.

† He asserts, in his 7th epistle, that he is willing neither to put to death, nor to injure the Christians in any manner, but the worshippers of the gods were on all occasions to be preferred — προτιμᾶσθαι. Compare Epist. lii.

‡ His usual phrase was, "worshippers of the dead, and of the bones of men."

CHAP. VI.

His sarcastic tone.

to inflame, rather than to allay, the internal feuds of Christianity. Julian revoked the sentence of banishment pronounced against Arians, Apollinarians, and Donatists. He determined, it is said, to expose them to a sort of public exhibition of intellectual gladiatorship. He summoned the advocates of the several sects to dispute in his presence, and presided with mock solemnity over their debates. His own voice was drowned in the clamour, till at length, as though to contrast them, to their disadvantage, with the wild barbarian warriors with whom he had been engaged,—"Hear me," exclaimed the Emperor; "the Franks and the Alemanni have heard me." "No wild beasts," he said, "are so savage and intractable as Christian sectaries." He even endured personal insult. The statue of the "Fortune of Constantinople," bearing a cross in its hand, had been set up by Constantine. Julian took away the cross, and removed the Deity into a splendid temple. While he was employed in sacrifice, he was interrupted by the remonstrances of Maris, the Arian bishop of Chalcedon, to whom age and blindness had added courage. "Peace," said the Emperor, "blind old man, thy Galilean God will not restore thine eyesight." "I thank my God," answered Maris, "for my blindness, which spares me the pain of beholding an apostate like thee." Julian calmly proceeded in his sacrifice.*

The sagacity of Julian perceived the advantage to be obtained by contrasting the wealth, the power,

* Socrates, iii. 12.

BOOK III.

and the lofty tone of the existing priesthood with the humility of the primitive Christians. On the occasion of a dispute between the Arian and orthodox party in Edessa, he confiscated their wealth, in order, as he said, to reduce them to their becoming and boasted poverty. "Wealth, according to their admirable law," he ironically says, "prevents them from attaining the kingdom of heaven."*

Taunts their professions of poverty.

Privileges withdrawn.

But his hostility was not confined to these indirect and invidious measures, or to quiet or insulting scorn. He began by abrogating all the exclusive privileges of the clergy; their immunity from taxation, and exemptions from public duties. He would not allow Christians to be præfects, as their law prohibited their adjudging capital punishments. He resumed all the grants made on the revenues of the municipalities, and the supplies of corn for their maintenance. It was an act of more unwarrantable yet politic tyranny to exclude them altogether from the public education. By a familiarity with the great models of antiquity, the Christian had risen at least to the level of the most correct and elegant of the Heathen writers of the day. Though something of Oriental expression, from the continual adoption of language or of imagery from the Sacred Writings, adhered to their style, yet even that gives a kind of raciness and originality to their language, which, however foreign to the purity of Attic Greek, is more animating and attractive than the prolix and languid periods of Libanius, or the vague metaphysics

Exclusion from public education.

* Socrat. iii. 13.

of Iamblichus. Julian perceived the danger, and resented this usurpation, as it were, of the arms of Paganism, and their employment against their legitimate parent. It is not, indeed, quite clear how far, or in what manner, the prohibition of Julian affected the Christians. A general system of education, for the free and superior classes, had gradually spread through the empire. * Each city maintained a certain number of professors, according to its size and population, who taught grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy. They were appointed by the magistracy, and partly paid from the municipal funds. Vespasian first assigned stipends to professors in Rome, the Antonines extended the establishment to the other cities of the empire. They received two kinds of emoluments; the salary from the city, and a small fixed gratuity from their scholars. They enjoyed considerable immunities, exemption from military and civil service, and from all ordinary taxation. There can be no doubt that this education, as originally designed, was more or less intimately allied with the ancient religion. The grammarians, the poets†, the orators, the philosophers of Greece and Rome, were the writers whose works were explained and instilled into the youthful mind. "The vital principle, Julian asserted, in the writings of Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides,

Education of the higher classes.

* There is an essay on the professors and general system of education, by Monsieur Naudet, Mém. de l'Institut., vol. x. p. 399.

† Homer, then considered, if not the parent, the great authority for the Pagan mythology, was the elementary school-book.

BOOK III.

Isocrates, Lysias, was the worship of the gods. Some of these writers had dedicated themselves to Mercury, some to the Muses. Mercury and the Muses were the tutelar deities of the Pagan schools." The Christians had glided imperceptibly into some of these offices, and perhaps some of the professors had embraced Christianity. But Julian declared that the Christians must be shameful hypocrites, or the most sordid of men, who, for a few drachms, would teach what they did not believe.* The Emperor might, with some plausibility, have insisted that the ministers of public instruction paid by the state, or from public funds, should at least not be hostile to the religion of the state. If the prohibition extended no farther than their exclusion from the public professorships, the measure might have worn some appearance of equity ; but it was the avowed policy of Julian to exclude them, if possible, from all advantages derived from the liberal study of Greek letters. The original edict disclaimed the intention of compelling the Christians to attend the Pagan schools ; but it contemptuously asserted the right of the government to control men so completely out of their senses, and, at the same time, affected condescension to their weakness and obstinacy.† But if the Emperor did not compel them to learn, he forbade them to teach. The

* When Christianity resumed the ascendancy, this act of intolerance was adduced in justification of the severities of Theodosius against Paganism. Petunt etiam, ut illis privilegia deferas, qui loquendi et docendi nostris communem usum Juliani lege proximâ denegarunt. Ambros. Epist. Resp. ad Symmach.

† Julian. Epist. xlii. p. 420. Socrates, v. 18. Theodoret, iii. 8. Sozomen, v. 18. Greg. Naz. Or. iii. p. 51. 96, 97.

interdict, no doubt, extended to their own private and separate schools for Hellenic learning. They were not to instruct in Greek letters without the sanction of the municipal magistracy. He added insult to this narrow prohibition: he taunted them with their former avowed contempt for human learning; he would not permit them to lay their profane hands on Homer and Plato. "Let them be content to explain Matthew and Luke in the churches of the Galileans."* Some of the Christian professors obeyed the imperial edict.† Proæresius, who taught rhetoric with great success at Rome, calmly declined the overtures of the Emperor, and retired into a private station. Musonius, a rival of the great Proæresius, was silenced. But they resorted to an expedient which shows that they had full freedom of Christian instruction. A Christian Homer, a Christian Pindar, and other works were composed in which Christian sentiments and opinions were interwoven into the language of the original poets. The piety of the age greatly admired these Christian parodies, which, however, do not seem to have maintained their ground even in the Christian schools.‡

Julian is charged with employing unworthy or insidious arts to extort an involuntary assent to Pagan-

* Julian. Epist. xlv.

† The more liberal Heathens were disgusted and ashamed at this measure of Julian. Illud autem erat inclemens, obruendum perenni silentio, quod arcebat docere magistros, rhetoricos, et grammaticos, ritûs Christiani cultores. Amm. Marcell. xx. c. 10.

‡ After the death of Julian, they were contemptuously thrown aside by the Christians themselves. Τῶν δὲ οἱ πόνοι ἐν τῷ ἴσῳ μὴ γραφῆναι, λογίζονται. Socrates, E. H. iii. 16.

BOOK III.

Arts of Julian to undermine Christianity.

ism. Heathen symbols every where replaced those of Christianity. The medals display a great variety of deities, with their attributes. Jupiter is crowning the Emperor, Mars and Mercury inspire him with military skill and eloquence. The monogram of Christ disappeared from the labarum, and on the standards were represented the gods of Paganism. As the troops defiled before the Emperor, each man was ordered to throw a few grains of frankincense upon an altar which stood before him. The Christians were horror-stricken, when they found that, instead of an act of legitimate respect to the Emperor, they had been betrayed into paying homage to idols. Some bitterly lamented their involuntary sacrilege, and indignantly threw down their arms; some of them are said to have surrounded the palace, and loudly avowing that they were Christians, reproached the Emperor with his treachery, and cast down the largess that they had received. For this breach of discipline and insult to the Emperor, they were led out to military execution. They vied with each other, it is said, for the honours of martyrdom.* But the bloody scene was interrupted by a messenger from the Emperor, who contented himself with expelling them from the army, and sending them into banishment.

Persecutions.

Actual persecutions, though unauthorised by the imperial edicts, would take place in some parts

* Jovian, Valentinian, and Valens, the future Emperors, are said to have been among those who refused to serve in the army. Julian, however, declined to accept the resignation of the former.

from the collision of the two parties. The Pagans, now invested in authority, would not be always disposed to use that authority with discretion, and the Pagan populace would seize the opportunity of revenging the violation of their temples, or the interruption of their rites, by the more zealous Christians. No doubt the language of an address delivered to Constantius and Constans expressed the sentiments of a large party among the Christians. "Destroy without fear, destroy ye, most religious Emperors, the ornaments of the temples. Coin the idols into money, or melt them into useful metal. Confiscate all their endowments for the advantage of the Emperor and of the government. God has sanctioned, by your recent victories, your hostility to the temples." The writer proceeds to thunder out the passages of the Mosaic law, which enforce the duty of the extirpation of idolaters.* No doubt, in many places, the eager fanaticism of the Christians had outstripped the tardy movements of imperial zeal. In many cases it would now be thought an act of religion to reject, in others, it would be impossible to satisfy, the demands for restitution. The best authenticated acts of direct persecution relate to these disputes. Nor can Julian himself be exculpated from the guilt, if not of conniving at, of faintly rebuking these tumultuous acts of revenge or of wanton outrage. In some of the Syrian towns, Gaza, Hieropolis, and Cæsarea, the Pagans had perpetrated cruelties too horrible

* Julius Firmicus Maternus, de Errore Profanorum Religionum, c. 29.

BOOK III.

to detail. Not content with massacring the Christians, with every kind of indignity, they had treated their lifeless remains with unprecedented outrage. They sprinkled the entrails of their victims with barley, that the fowls might be tempted to devour them. At Heliopolis, their cannibal fury did not shrink from tasting the blood and the inward parts of murdered priests and virgins. Julian calmly expresses his regret that the restorers of the temples of the gods have in some instances exceeded his expressed intentions; which, however, seem to have authorised the destruction of the Christian churches, or at least some of their sacred places.*

Restoration of temples.

Julian made an inauspicious choice in the battle-field on which he attempted to decide his conflict with Christianity. Christianity predominated to a greater extent in Constantinople and in Antioch than in any other cities of the empire. In Rome he might have appealed to the antiquity of Heathenism, and its eternal association with the glories of the republic. In Athens, he would have combined in more amicable confederacy the philosophy and the religion. In Athens his accession had given a considerable impulse to Paganism, the temples with the rest of the public

Julian contends on ill-chosen ground.

* Greg. Nazianz. Socrates, iii. 14. Sozomen, v. 9. Compare Gibbon, vol. iv. p. 116., who has referred the following passage in the Misopogon to these scenes.

Οἱ τὰ μὲν τῶν θεῶν ἀνέστησαν αὐτίκα τεμένη· τοὺς τάφους δὲ τῶν ἀθέων ἀνέτρεψαν πάντας ὑπὸ τοῦ συνθήματος, ὃ δὴ δέδοται παρ' ἐμοῦ πρώην, οὕτως ἐπάρθεντες τὸν νοῦν, καὶ μετέωροι γενόμενοι τὴν διανοίαν, ὡς καὶ πλέον ἐπεξελθεῖν τοῖς εἰς τοὺς θεοὺς πλημμελοῦσιν, ἢ βουλωμένῳ μοι ἦν. Misopogon, p. 361.

Did he mean by the τάφοι chapels, like those built over the remains of St. Babylas, in the Daphne, at Antioch, or the churches in general?

buildings, had renewed their youth.* Eleusis, which had fallen into ruin, now reassumed its splendour, and might have been wisely made the centre of his new system. But in Constantinople all was modern and Christian. Piety to the imperial founder was closely connected with devotion to his religion. Julian could only restore the fanes of the tutelary gods of old Byzantium; he could strip the fortune of the city of her Christian attributes, but he could not give a Pagan character to a city which had grown up under Christian auspices. Constantinople remained contumaciously and uniformly Christian. Antioch had been a chief seat of that mingled Oriental and Grecian worship of the Sun which had grown up in all the Hellenised parts of Asia; the name of Daphne given to the sacred grove, implied that the fictions of Greece had been domiciliated in Syria. Antioch was now divided by two incongruous, but equally dominant passions, devotion to Christianity and attachment to the games, the theatre, and every kind of public amusement. The bitter sarcasms of Julian on the latter subject are justified and confirmed by the grave and serious admonitions of Chrysostom. By a singular coincidence, Antioch came into collision with the strongest prejudices of Julian. His very virtues were fatal to his success in the re-establishment of Paganism; its connection

Constantinople.

Antioch.

* Mamertinus, probably, highly paints the ruin, that he may exalt the restorer. Ipsæ illæ bonarum artium magistræ et inventrices Athenæ omnem cultum publicè privatimque perdiderant. In miserandam ruinam conciderat Eleusina. Mamert. Grat. Actio. ix. p. 147.

BOOK III.

with the amusements of the people Julian repudiated with philosophic disdain. Instead of attempting to purify the degenerate taste, he had all the austerity of a Pagan monk. Public exhibitions were interdicted to his reformed priesthood; once, at the beginning of the year, the Emperor entered the theatre, remained in undisguised weariness, and withdrew in disgust. He was equally impatient of wasting his time as a spectator of the chariot race; he attended occasionally, out of respect to the presiding deity of the games; saw five or six courses, and retired.* Yet Paganism might appear to welcome Julian to Antioch. It had still many followers, who clung with fond attachment to its pomps and gay processions. The whole city poured forth to receive him; by some he was hailed as a deity. It happened to be the festival of Adonis, and the loud shouts of welcome to the Emperor were mingled with the wild and shrill cries of the women, wailing that Syrian symbol of the universal deity, the Sun. It might seem an awful omen that the rites which mourned the departure of the genial deity should welcome his ardent worshipper.† The outward appearance of religion must have affected Julian with alternate hope and disappointment. From all quarters, diviners, augurs, magicians, enchanters, the priests of Cybele, and of the other Eastern religions, flocked to Antioch. His palace was crowded with men, whom Chrysostom describes

Julian at Antioch.

* Misopogon, p. 339, 340. Amm. xxii. 9.

† Evenerat iisdem diebus annuo cursu completo Adonica ritu veteri celebrari. Amm. Marc. xxii. 9.

as branded with every crime, as infamous for poisonings and witchcrafts. "Men who had grown old in prisons and in the mines, and who maintained their wretched existence by the most disgraceful trades, were suddenly advanced to places of dignity, and invested with the priesthood and sacrificial functions."* The severe Julian, as he passed through the city, was encircled by the profligate of every age, and by prostitutes, with their wanton laughter and shameless language. Among the former, the ardent, youthful, and ascetic preacher, probably included all the Theurgists of the philosophic school; the latter describes the festal processions, which no doubt retained much of their old voluptuous character. Julian ascended the lofty top of Mount Casius, to solemnise, under the broad and all-embracing cope of heaven, the rites of Jupiter Philius.† But in the luxurious grove of Daphne, he was doomed to a melancholy disappointment. The grove remained with all its beautiful scenery, its shady recesses, its cool and transparent streams, in which the Heathen inhabitants of Antioch had mingled their religious rites with their private enjoyments. But a serious gloom, a solemn quiet, pervaded the whole place. The temple of Apollo, the magnificent edifice in which the devotion of former ages had sacrificed hecatombs, where the clouds of incense had soared above the grove, and in which the pomp of Oriental worship had assembled half

Temple on Mount Casius.

The Daphne.

* Chrysostom contra Gent.

† The Jupiter Philius, or Casius. This god was the tutelary deity of Antioch, and appears on the medals of the city. St. Martin, note to Le Beau, iii. 6.

BOOK III.

Syria, was silent and deserted. He expected (in his own words *) a magnificent procession, victims, libations, dances, incense, boys with white and graceful vests, and with minds as pure and unspotted, dedicated to the service of the god. He entered the temple; he found a solitary priest, with a single goose for sacrifice. The indignant Emperor poured out his resentment in the bitterest language; he reproached the impiety, the shameful parsimony of the inhabitants, who enjoyed the large estates attached to the temple, and thus neglected its services; who at the same time permitted their wives to lavish their treasures on the infamous Galileans, and on their scandalous banquets, called the Maiuma.

Julian determined to restore the majesty of the temple and worship of Apollo. But it was first necessary to dispossess the Christian usurper of the sacred place. The remains of Babylas, the martyred Bishop of Antioch, who had suffered, probably in the Decian persecution, had been removed eleven years before to Daphne; and the Christians crowded to pay their devotions near his tomb. The Christians assert, that the baffled Apollo confessed himself abashed in the presence of the saint; his oracle dared not break silence. † At all events, Julian determined to purify the grove from the contamination of this worship. The remains of Babylas were ordered to be transported back to Antioch. They were met by a solemn procession of a great part of the inhabitants. The relics were raised on a chariot, and conducted in triumph, with the excited multitude dancing before it, and thunder-

Remains of Babylas.

* Misopogon, 362. † Chrysostom, Orat. in S. Babylam.

ing out the maledictory psalm:—"Confounded be all they that worship carved images, and delight in vain idols." Julian attempted to punish this outburst of popular feeling. But the firmness of the first victim who endured the torture, and the remonstrances of the Præfect Sallust, brought him back to his better temper of mind. The restoration of the temple proceeded with zealous haste. A splendid peristyle arose around it; when at midnight Julian received the intelligence that the temple was on fire. The roof and all the ornaments were entirely consumed, and the statue of the god himself, of gilded wood, yet of such astonishing workmanship that it is said to have enforced the homage of the conquering Sapor, was burned to ashes. The Christians beheld the manifest wrath of Heaven, and asserted that the lightning had come down and smitten the idolatrous edifice. Julian ascribed the conflagration to the malice of the Christians. The most probable account is, that a devout worshipper had lighted a number of torches before an image of the Queen of Heaven, which had set fire to some part of the building. Julian exacted, as it were, reprisals on Christianity; he ordered the cathedral of Antioch to be closed. His orders were executed with insult to the sacred place, and the spoliation of the sacred vessels.*

Fire in the temple.

Julian, in the meantime, was not regardless of the advancement of the Pagan interest in other parts of the empire. Alexandria could not be at peace while any kind of religious excitement inflamed the minds of men. The character of

Alexandria.

* Amm. Marc. xxii. 13. Theodor. iii. 11. Sozomen, v. 20.

BOOK III.

George, Arian Bishop of Alexandria.

George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria, is loaded by Heathen as well as by Christian writers with every kind of obloquy. His low birth; the base and sordid occupations of his youth; his servile and intriguing meanness in manhood; his tyranny in power, trace, as it were, his whole life with increasing odiousness. Yet, extraordinary as it may seem, the Arian party could find no man of better reputation to fill this important post; and George, the impartial tyrant of all parties, perished at last, the victim of his zealous hostility to Paganism. A chief cause of the unpopularity of George was the assertion of the imperial right over the fee-simple of the land on which Alexandria was built. This right was gravely deduced from Alexander the Great. During the reign of Constantius, George had seized every opportunity of depressing and insulting Paganism; he had interdicted the festivals and the sacrifices of the Heathen; he had pillaged the gifts, the statues, and ornaments of their temple; he had been heard, as he past the temple either of Serapis himself, or of the Fortune of the city, to utter the contemptuous expression, "How long will this sepulchre be permitted to stand?"* He had discovered a cave where the Mithriac mysteries were said to have been carried on with a horrible sacrifice of human life. The heads of a number of youths were exposed (probably disinterred from some old cemetery near which these rites had been established), as of the victims of this sanguinary idolatry. These insults and outrages rankled in the hearts of

* Amm. Marcell. xxii. 11. Socrates, iii. 2.

the Pagans. The fate of Artemius, the Duke of Egypt, the friend and abettor of George in all his tyrannical proceedings, prepared the way for that of George. Artemius was suspected of being concerned in the death of Gallus. He was charged with enormous delinquencies by the people of Alexandria. Whether as a retribution for the former offence against the brother of Julian, or as the penalty for his abuse of his authority in his government, Artemius was condemned to death. The intelligence of his execution was the signal for a general insurrection of the Pagans in Alexandria. The palace of George was invested by a frantic mob. In an instant he was dragged forth, murdered, trampled under foot, dragged along the streets, and at length torn limb from limb. With him perished two officers of the empire, Dracontius, master of the mint, and the Count Diodorus; the one accused of having destroyed an altar of Serapis, the other of having built a church. The mangled remains of these miserable men were paraded through the streets on the back of a camel, and at length, lest they should be enshrined and worshipped as the relics of martyrs, cast into the sea. The Christians, however, of all parties, appear to have looked with unconcern on the fate of this episcopal tyrant *, whom, the general hatred, if it did not excite them to assist in his massacre, prevented them from attempting to defend. Julian addressed a letter to the people of Alexandria. While he

His death.

* Poterantque miserandi homines ad crudele supplicium devoti, Christianorum adjumento defendi, ni Georgii odio omnes indiscretè flagrabant. Ammian. Marcell. xxii. 11.

BOOK III.

admitted, in the strongest terms, the guilt of George, he severely rebuked their violence and presumption in thus taking the law into their own hands, and the horrible inhumanity of tearing like dogs the bodies of men in pieces, and then presuming to lift up their blood-stained hands to the gods. He admitted that their indignation for their outraged temples and insulted gods might naturally madden them to just resentment; but they should have awaited the calm and deliberate course of justice, which would have exacted the due punishment from the offender. Julian secured to himself part of the spoils of the murdered prelate. George had a splendid library, rich not merely in the writings of the Galileans, but, what Julian esteemed as infinitely more precious, the works of the Greek orators and philosophers. The first he would willingly have destroyed, the latter he commanded to be carefully reserved for his own use.*

Athanasius.

In the place of George arose a more powerful adversary. Julian knew and dreaded the character of Athanasius, who, during these tumults, had quietly resumed his authority over the orthodox Christians of Alexandria. The general edict of Julian for the recall of all exiles contained no exception; and Athanasius availed himself of its protecting authority.† Under his auspices, the church, even in these disastrous times, resumed its vigour. The Arians, terrified perhaps by the hostility of the Pagans, hastened to reunite themselves to the church; and Julian heard, with bitter indignation,

* Julian. Epist. ix. & x. † Julian. Epist. xxvi. p. 398.

CHAP. VI.

that some Pagan females had received baptism from Athanasius. Julian expressed his astonishment, not that Athanasius had returned from exile, but that he had dared to resume his see. He ordered him into instant banishment. He appealed, in a letter to the præfect, to the mighty Serapis, that if Athanasius, the enemy of the gods, was not expelled from the city before the calends of December, he should impose a heavy fine. "By his influence the gods were brought into contempt; it would be better, therefore, that "this most wicked Athanasius" were altogether banished from Egypt." To a supplication from the Christian inhabitants of the city in favour of Athanasius, he returned a sarcastic and contemptuous reply, reminding the people of Alexandria of their descent from Pagan ancestors, and of the greatness of the gods they worshipped, and expressing his astonishment that they should prefer the worship of Jesus, the Word of God, to that of the Sun, the glorious and visible and eternal emblem of the Deity.*

In other parts, justified perhaps in their former excesses, or encouraged to future acts of violence, by the impunity of the Alexandrians, Paganism awoke, if not to make reprisals by conversion, at least to take a bloody revenge on its Christian adversaries.† The atrocious persecutions of the fanatic populace, in some of the cities of Syria, have already been noticed. The aged Mark of Arethusa was, if not the most blameless, at least the victim of these cruelties, whose life ought to have been

* Julian. Epist. xi. p. 378. † Julian. Epist. x. p. 377.

BOOK III.

Death of Mark of Arethusa.

sanctified even by the rumour which ascribed the preservation of Julian, when an infant, to the pious bishop. Mark was accused of having destroyed a temple; he was summoned to rebuild it at his own expense. But Mark, with the virtues, inherited the primitive poverty of the Apostles; and, even if he had had the power, no doubt, would have resisted this demand.* But the furious populace, according to Sozomen, men, women, and schoolboys, seized on the old man, and inflicted every torment which their inventive barbarity could suggest. The patience and calm temperament of the old man resisted and survived the cruelties.† Julian is said to have expressed no indignation, and ordered no punishment. The præfect Sallust reminded him of the disgrace to which Paganism was exposed, by being thus put to shame by a feeble old man.

Julian courts the Jews.

The policy of Julian induced him to seek out every alliance which could strengthen the cause of Paganism against Christianity. Polytheism courted an unnatural union with Judaism; their bond of connection was their common hatred to Christianity. It is not clear whether Julian was sufficiently acquainted with the writings of the Christians, distinctly to apprehend that they considered the final destruction of the Jewish temple to be one of the great prophecies on which their religion rested. The

* According to Theodoret, Ὁ δὲ, ἴσον εἰς ἀσέβειαν ἔφη, τὸ ὀβολὸν γοῦν ἕνα δοῦναι, τῷ πάντα δοῦναι. E. H. iii. 7.

† Sozomen gives the most detailed account of this cruel scene, which was clearly a kind of popular tumult, which the authorities in no way interfered to repress. E. H. v. 10.

rebuilding of that temple was bringing, as it were, this question to direct issue; it was an appeal to God, whether he had or had not finally rejected the people of Israel, and admitted the Christians to all their great and exclusive privileges. At all events, the elevation of Judaism was the depression of Christianity. It set the Old Testament, to which the Christians appealed, in direct and hostile opposition to the New.

The profound interest awakened in the Jewish mind showed that they embraced, with eager fervour, this solemn appeal to Heaven. With the joy which animated the Jew, at this unexpected summons to return to his native land, and to rebuild his fallen temple, mingled, no doubt, some natural feeling of triumph and of gratified animosity over the Christian. In every part of the empire the Jews awoke from their slumber of abasement and of despondency. It was not for them to repudiate the overtures of Paganism. The Emperor acknowledged their God, by the permission to build again the temple to his glory; and, if not as the sole and supreme God, yet his language affected a monotheistic tone, and they might indulge the fond hope that the re-establishment of the temple upon Mount Moriah might be preparatory to the final triumph of their faith, in the awe-struck veneration of the whole world; the commencement of the Messiah's kingdom; the dawn of their long-delayed, but, at length, approaching millennium of empire and of religious supremacy. Those who could not contribute their personal labour devoted

Determines to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem.

BOOK III.

their wealth to the national work. The extent of their sacrifices, the eagerness of their hopes, rather belong to the province of Jewish history. But every precaution was taken to secure the uninterrupted progress of the work. It was not an affair of the Jewish nation, but of the imperial government. It was entrusted to the ruler of the province, as the delegate of the Emperor. Funds were advanced from the public treasury; and, if the Jews themselves, of each sex and of every age, took pride in hallowing their own hands by assisting in heaping up the holy earth, or hewing the stone to be employed in this sacred design; if they wrought their wealth into tools of the precious metals, shovels and spades of silver, which were to become valued heirlooms, as consecrated by this pious service, the Emperor seemed to take a deep personal interest in the design, which was at once to immortalise his magnificence, and to assist his other glorious undertakings. The Jews, who acknowledged that it was not lawful to offer sacrifice except on that holy place, were to propitiate their God, during his expedition into Persia; and on his triumphant return from that region, he promised to unite with them in adoration in the restored city and in the reconstructed fane of the great God of the Jews.*

Judaism and Paganism had joined in this solemn adjuration, as it were, of the Deity. Their vows were met with discomfiture and disappointment.

* In his letter to the Jews, he calls the God of the Jews, κρείττων; in his Theologic Fragment (p.295.), μέγας Θεός.

CHAP. VI.

Interrupted.

The simple fact of the interruption of their labours, by an event, which the mass of mankind could not but consider præternatural, even as recorded by the Pagan historians, appeared, in the more excited and imaginative minds of the Christians, a miracle of the most terrific and appalling nature. Few, if any, of the Christians could have been eye-witnesses of the scene. The Christian world would have averted its face in horror from the impious design. The relation must, in the first instance, have come from the fears of the discomfited and affrighted workmen. The main fact is indisputable, that, as they dug down to the foundations, terrific explosions took place; what seemed balls of fire burst forth; the works were shattered to pieces; clouds of smoke and dust enveloped the whole in darkness, broke only by the wild and fitful glare of the flames. Again the work was renewed by the obstinate zeal of the Jews; again they were repelled by this unseen and irresistible power, till they cast away their implements, and abandoned the work in humiliation and despair. How far natural causes, the ignition of the foul vapours, confined in the deeply excavated recesses of the hill of the temple, according to the recent theory, will account for the facts, as they are related in the simpler narrative of Marcellinus, may admit of some question; but the philosophy of the age, whether Heathen or Christian, was as unable as it was unwilling to trace such appalling events to the unvarying operations of nature.*

* See M. Guizot's note on Gibbon, with my additional observations. There seems a strong distinction in point of credibility

BOOK III.

Christianity may have embellished this wonderful event, but Judaism and Paganism confessed by their terrors the prostration of their hopes. The work was abandoned; and the Christians of later ages could appeal to the remains of the shattered works and unfinished excavations, as the unanswerable sign of the divine wrath against their adversaries, as the public and miraculous declaration of God in favour of their insulted religion.

But it was not as Emperor alone that the indefatigable Julian laboured to overthrow the Christian religion. It was not by the public edict, the more partial favour shown to the adherents of Paganism, the insidious disparagement of Christianity, by the depression of its ministers and apostles, and the earnest elevation of Heathenism, to a moral code and an harmonious religion, with all the pomp of a sumptuous ritual; it was not in the council, or the camp, or the temple alone, that Julian stood forth as the avowed antagonist of Christianity. He was ambitious, as a writer, of confuting its principles and disproving its veracity: he passed in his closet the long nights of the winter, and con-

Writings of Julian.

between miracles addressed to the terror and those which appeal to the calmer emotions of the mind, such as most of those recorded in the Gospel. The former, in the first place, are usually momentary, or, if prolonged, endure but a short time. But the passion of fear so completely unhinges and disorders the mind, as to deprive it of all trustworthy power of observation or discrimination. In themselves, therefore, I should venture to conclude that terrific miracles, resting on human testimony, are less credible than those of a less appalling nature. Though the other class of emotions, those of joy or gratitude, or religious veneration, likewise disturb the equable and dispassionate state of mind requisite for cool reasoning, yet such miracles are in general both more calmly surveyed, and more permanent in their effects.

tinued, during his Persian campaign, his elaborate work against the faith of Christ. He seemed, as it were, possessed with an equal hatred of those whom he considered the two most dangerous enemies of the Roman empire, the Persians and the Christians. While oppressed by all the serious cares of organising and moving such an army as might bring back the glorious days of Germanicus or of Trajan; while his ambition contemplated nothing less than the permanent humiliation of the great Eastern rival of the empire; his literary vanity found time for its exercise, and in all his visions of military glory and conquest, Julian never lost sight of his fame as an author.* It is difficult to judge from the fragments of this work, selected for confutation after his death by Cyril of Jerusalem, of the power, or even of the candour, shown by the imperial controversialist. But it appears to have been composed in a purely polemic spirit, with no lofty or comprehensive views of the real nature of the Christian religion, no fine and philosophic perception of that which in the new faith had so powerfully and irresistibly occupied the whole soul of man; with no consciousness of the utter inefficiency of the cold and incoherent Pagan mysticism, which he endeavoured to substitute for the Gospel.

Work against Christianity.

But, at least, this was a grave and serious employment. Whatever might be thought of his success as a religious disputant, there was no loss

* Julianus Augustus septem libros in expeditione Parthicâ adversum Christum evomuit. Hieronym. Oper. Epist. lxx.

BOOK III.

Miso-pogon.

of dignity in the Emperor condescending to enlighten his subjects on such momentous questions. But, when he stooped to be the satirist of the inhabitants of a city which had ridiculed his philosophy and rejected his religion, the finest and most elegant irony, the keenest and most delicate wit, would scarcely have justified this compromise of the imperial majesty. But, in the Misopogon — the apology for his philosophic beard — Julian mingled the coarseness of the Cynic with the bitterness of personal indignity. The vulgar ostentation of his own filthiness, the description of the vermin which peopled his thick beard, ill accord with the philosophic superiority with which Julian rallies the love of amusement and gaiety among his subjects of Antioch. Their follies were at least more graceful and humane than this rude pedantry. There is certainly much felicity of sarcasm, doubtless much justice, in his animadversions on the dissolute manners, the ingratitude for his liberality, the dislike of his severe justice, the insolence of their contempt for his ruder manners, throughout the Misopogon; but it lowers Julian from a follower of Plato, to a coarse imitator of Diogenes; it exhibits him as borrowing the worst part of the Christian monkish character, the disregard of the decencies and civilities of life, without the high and visionary enthusiasm, or the straining after superiority to the low cares and pursuits of the world. It was singular to hear a Grecian sophist, for such was undoubtedly the character of Julian's writings, extolling the barbarians, the Celts

CHAP. VI.

and Germans, above the polished inhabitants of Greece and Syria.

Julian sets forth on his Persian expedition.

Paganism followed with faithful steps, and with eager hopes, the career of Julian on the brilliant outset of his Persian campaign. Some of the Syrian cities through which he passed, Batne and Hierapolis, and Carrhæ, seemed to enter into his views, and endeavoured, with incense and sacrifice, to propitiate the gods of Julian.* For the last time the Etruscan haruspices accompanied a Roman Emperor; but by a singular fatality, their adverse interpretation of the signs of heaven was disdained, and Julian followed the advice of the philosophers, who coloured their predictions with the bright hues of the Emperor's ambition.†

Death of Julian.

The death of Julian did greater honour to his philosophy. We may reject as in itself improbable, and as resting on insufficient authority, the bitter sentence ascribed to him when he received his fatal wound. "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean.‡" He comforted his weeping friends; he expressed his readiness to pay the debt of nature, and his joy that the purer and better part of his being was so soon to be released from the gross and material body. "The gods of heaven sometimes bestow an early death as the best reward of the most pious." His conscience uttered no reproach; he had administered the empire with moderation, firmness and clemency; he had repressed the licence of

* Julian. Epist. xxvii. p. 399. Amm. Marc. xxii. 2.

† Amm. Marc. xxiii. v.

‡ Νενίκηκας, Γάλιλαιε. Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. iii. 25.

BOOK III.

public manners; he had met danger with firmness. His prescient spirit had long informed him that he should fall by the sword. And he thanked the everlasting deity that he thus escaped the secret assassination, the slow and wasting disease, the ignominious death; and departed from the world in the midst of his glory and prosperity. "It is equal cowardice to seek death before our time, and to attempt to avoid it when our time is come." His calmness was only disturbed by the intelligence of the loss of a friend. He who despised his own death lamented that of another. He reproved the distress of his attendants, declaring that it was humiliating to mourn over a prince already reconciled to the heavens and to the stars; and thus calmly discoursing with the philosophers Priscus and Maximus on the metaphysics of the soul, expired Julian, the philosopher and Emperor.*

Julian died, perhaps happily for his fame. Perilous as his situation was, he might still have extricated himself by his military skill and courage, and eventually succeeded in his conflict with the Persian empire; he might have dictated terms to Sapor, far

* Amm. Marc. *ibid.* Even the Christians, at a somewhat later period, did justice to the great qualities of Julian. The character drawn by the Pagan, Aurelius Victor, is adopted by Prudentius, who kindles into unusual vigour. Cupido laudis immodicæ; cultus numinum superstitiosus: audax plus, quam imperatorem decet, cui salus propria cum semper ad securitatem omnium, maximè in bello, conservanda est. Epit. p. 228.

Ductor fortissimus armis;
Conditor et legum celeberrimus; ore manuque
Consultor patriæ, sed non consultor habendæ
Religionis; amans ter centum millia Divûm;
Perfidus ille Deo, sed non et perfidus orbi. Apoth. 430.

Probable results of Julian's conflict with Christianity.

different from those which the awe of his name and the vigorous organisation of his army, even after his death, extorted from the prudent Persian. But in his other, his internal conflict, Julian could have obtained no victory, even at the price of rivers of blood shed in persecution, and perhaps civil wars, throughout the empire. He might have arrested the fall of the empire, but that of Paganism was beyond the power of man.* The invasion of arms may be resisted or repelled, the silent and profound encroachments of opinion and religious sentiment will not retrograde. Already there had been ominous indications that the temper of Julian would hardly maintain its more moderate policy; nor would Christianity in that age have been content with opposing him with passive courage; the insulting fanaticism of the violent, no less than the stubborn contumacy of the disobedient, would have goaded him by degrees to severer measures. The whole empire would have been rent by civil dissensions; the bold adventurer would scarcely have been wanting, who, either from ambition or enthusiasm, would have embraced the Christian cause; and the pacific spirit of genuine Christianity, its high notions of submission to civil authority, would scarcely, generally or constantly, have resisted the temptation of resuming its seat upon the throne. Julian could not have subdued Christianity, without depopulating the empire; nor contested with it the sovereignty of the world, without danger to himself

* Julian's attempt to restore Paganism was like that of Rienzi to restore the liberties of Rome.

BOOK III.

and to the civil authority; nor yielded, without the disgrace and bitterness of failure. He who stands across the peaceful stream of progressive opinion, by his resistance maddens it to an irresistible torrent, and is either swept away by it at once, or diverts it over the whole region in one devastating deluge.*

* Theodoret describes the rejoicings at Antioch on the news of the death of Julian. There were not only festal dancings in the churches and the cemeteries of the martyrs, but in the theatres they celebrated the triumph of the cross, and mocked at his vaticinations.

Ἡ δὲ Ἀντιόχου πόλις τὴν ἐκείνου μεμαθηκυῖα σφαγὴν, δημοθοινίας ἐπετέλει καὶ πανηγύρεις καὶ οὐ μόνον ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις ἐχόρευον καὶ τοῖς μαρτύρων σηκοῖς, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις τοῦ σταυροῦ τὴν νίκην ἐκήρυττον, καὶ τοῖς ἐκείνου μαντεύμασιν ἐπετώθαζον. E. H. iii. 27.

CHAPTER VII.

VALENTINIAN AND VALENS.

Lamentations of the Pagans at the death of Julian.

It is singular to hear the Pagans taking up, in their altered position, the arguments of the Christians. The extinction of the family of Constantine was a manifest indication of the divine displeasure at the abandonment of Paganism.* But this was the calmer conclusion of less recent sorrow and disappointment. The immediate expression of Pagan regret was a bitter and reproachful complaint against the ingratitude of the gods, who made so bad a return for the zealous services of Julian. "Was this the reward for so many victims, so many prayers, so much incense, so much blood, shed on the altar, by night as well as by day. Julian, in his profuse and indiscriminate piety, had neglected no deity; he had worshipped all who lived in the tradition of the poets,—fathers and children, gods and goddesses, superior and subordinate deities; and they, instead of hurling their thunderbolts and lightnings, and all the armoury of Heaven, against the hostile Persians, had thus basely abandoned their sacred charge. The new Salmoneus, the more impious Lycurgus, the sense-

* Liban. pro Templis, ii. 184.

BOOK III.

less image of a man (such were the appellations with which the indignant rhetorician alluded to Constantius), who had waged implacable warfare with the gods, quenched the sacred fires, trampled on the altars, closed or demolished or profaned the temples, or alienated them to loose companions,—this man had been permitted to pollute the earth for fifty years, and then departed by the ordinary course of nature; while Julian, with all his piety, and all his glory, had only given to the world a hasty glimpse of his greatness, and suddenly departed from their unsatisfied sight."* But, without regarding the vain lamentations of Paganism, Christianity calmly resumed its ascendancy. The short reign of Jovian sufficed for its re-establishment; and, as yet, it exacted no revenge for its sufferings and degradation under Julian.† The character of the two brothers who succeeded to the empire, Valentinian and Valens, and their religious policy, were widely at variance. Valentinian ascended the throne with the fame of having rejected the favour of Julian, and the prospects of military

Reign of Jovian.

Valentinian and Valens.

* Libanius insults, in this passage, the worship of the dead man, whose sarcophagus (he seems to allude to the pix or consecrated box in which the sacramental symbol of our Saviour's body was enclosed) is introduced into the κλῆρος of the gods. Monod. in Julian. i. p. 509.

† Themistius praises highly the toleration of Jovian. "Thy law, and that of God, is eternal and unchangeable; that which leaves the soul of every man free to follow that form of religion which seems best to him." Ad Jovian. p. 81., ed. Dindorf. He proceeds to assert, that the general piety will be increased by the rivalry of different religions. "The Deity does not demand uniformity of faith." He touches on the evils which had arisen out of religious factions, and urges him to permit supplications to ascend to Heaven from all parts of the empire for his prosperous reign. He praises him, however, for suppressing magic and Goetic sacrifices.

distinction, for the sake of his religion. He had withdrawn from the army rather than offer even questionable adoration to standards decorated with the symbols of idolatry. But Valentinian was content to respect those rights of conscience which he had so courageously asserted.

A. D. 364. Toleration of Valentinian.

The Emperor of the West maintained a calm and uninterrupted toleration, which incurred the reproach of indifference from the Christian party, but has received the respectful homage of the Pagan historian.* The immunities and the privileges of the Pagan priesthood were confirmed†; the rites of divination were permitted, if performed without malicious intent.‡ The prohibition of midnight sacrifices, which seemed to be required by the public morals, threatened to deprive the Greeks of their cherished mysteries. Prætextatus, then proconsul of Achaia, the head of the Pagan party, a man of high and unblemished character, represented to the Emperor that these rites were necessary to the existence of the Greeks. The law was relaxed in their favour, on the condition of their strict adherence to ancient usage. In Rome, the vestal virgins maintained their sanctity; the altar of Victory, restored by Julian, preserved its place; a military guard protected the temples from insult, but a tolerant as well as prudent provision, forbade the employment of Christian soldiers on this service.§

* Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xxx. c. 9.

Testes sunt leges a me in exordio imperii mei datæ; quibus unicuique quod animo imbibisset, colendi libera facultas tributa est. Cod. Theod. l. ix. tit. 16. l. 9.

† Cod. Theod. xii. l. 60. 75.

‡ Cod. Theod. ix. 16. 9.

§ Cod. Theod. xvi. l. 1.

BOOK III.

Laws of Valentinian.

On the other hand, Valentinian appears to have retracted some of the lavish endowments conferred by Julian on the Heathen temples. These estates were re-incorporated with the private treasure of the sovereign.* At a later period of his reign, there must have been some general prohibition of animal sacrifice; the Pagan worship was restricted to the offering of incense to the gods.† But, according to the expression of Libanius, they dared not execute this law in Rome, so fatal would it have been considered to the welfare of the empire.‡

Prosecutions for magic.

Valens, in the East, as Valentinian, in the West, allowed perfect freedom to the public ritual of Paganism. But both in the East and in the West, the persecution against magic and unlawful divination told with tremendous force against the Pagan cause. It was the more fatal, because it was not openly directed against the religion, but against practices denounced as criminal, and believed to be real, by the general sentiment of mankind, and prosecuted by that fierce animosity which is engendered by fear. Some compassion might be felt for innocent victims, supposed to be unjustly implicated in such charges; the practice of extorting evidence or confession by torture, might be revolting, to those especially who looked back with pride and with envy to the boasted immunity of all Roman citizens from such cruelties; but where strong suspi-

* Cod. Theod. x. 1. 8. The law reads as if it were a more general and indiscriminate confiscation.

† Lib. pro Templis, vii. p. 163., ed. Reiske. This arose out of some recent and peculiar circumstances.

‡ Liban. vol. ii. p. 180.

cion of guilt prevailed, the public feeling would ratify the stern sentence of the law against such delinquents; the magician or the witch would pass to execution amid the universal abhorrence. The notorious connection of any particular religious party with such dreaded and abominated proceedings, particularly if proved by the conviction of a considerable majority of the condemned from their ranks, would tend to depress the religion itself. This sentiment was not altogether unjust. Paganism had, as it were, in its desperation, thrown itself upon the inextinguishable superstition of the human mind. The more the Pagans were depressed, the hope of regaining their lost superiority, the desire of vengeance, would induce them to seize on every method of awing or commanding the minds of their wavering votaries. Nor were those who condescended to these arts, or those who in many cases claimed the honours annexed to such fearful powers, only the bigoted priesthood, or mere itinerant traders in human credulity; the high philosophic party, which had gained such predominant influence during the reign of Julian, now wielded the terrors and incurred the penalties of these dark and forbidden practices. It is impossible to read their writings without remarking a boastful display of intercourse with supernatural agents, which to the Christian would appear an illicit communion with malignant spirits. This was not indeed magic, but it was the groundwork of it. The theurgy, or mysterious dealings of the Platonic philosopher with the dæmons or still higher powers,

BOOK III.

was separated by a thin and imperceptible distinction from Goetic or unlawful enchantment. Divination, indeed, or the foreknowledge of futurity by different arts, was an essential part of the Greek and Roman religion. But divination had, in Greece at least, withdrawn from its public office. It had retired from the silenced oracles of Delphi or Dodona. The gods, rebuked, according to the Christian, offended, according to the Pagan, had withdrawn their presence. In Rome the Etruscan soothsayers, as part of the great national ceremonial, maintained their place, and to a late period preserved their influence over the public mind. But, in general, it was only in secret, and to its peculiar favourites, that the summoned or spontaneous deity revealed the secrets of futurity; it was by the dream, or the private omen, the sign in the heavens, vouchsafed only to the initiate, or the direct inspiration; or, if risked, it was by the secret, mysterious, usually the nocturnal rite, that the reluctant God was compelled to disclose the course of fate.

Cruelty of Valentinian.

The persecutions of Valentinian in Rome were directed against magical ceremonies. The Pagans, who remembered the somewhat ostentatious lenity and patience of Julian on the public tribunal, might contrast the more than inexorable, the inquisitorial and sanguinary, justice of the Christian Valentinian, even in ordinary cases, with the benignant precepts of his religion. But justice with Valentinian, in all cases, more particularly in these persecutions, degenerated into savage tyranny. The

Emperor kept two fierce bears by his own chamber, to which the miserable criminals were thrown in his presence, while the unrelenting Valentinian listened with ferocious delight to their groans. One of these animals, as a reward for his faithful service to the state, received his freedom, and was let loose into his native forest.*

Trials in Rome before Maximin.

Maximin, the representative of Valentinian at Rome, administered the laws with all the vindictive ferocity, but without the severe dignity, of his imperial master. Maximin was of an obscure and barbarian family, settled in Pannonia. He had attained the government of Corsica and Sardinia, and subsequently of Tuscany. He was promoted in Rome to the important office of superintendent of the markets of the city. During the illness of Olybius, the præfect of Rome, the supreme judicial authority had been delegated to Maximin. Maximin was himself rumoured to have dabbled in necromantic arts, and lived in constant terror of accusation till released by the death of his accomplice. This rumour may create a suspicion that Maximin was, at least at the time at which the accusation pointed, a Pagan. The Paganism of a large proportion of his victims is more evident. The first trial over which Maximin presided was a charge made by Chilon, vicar of the præfects, and

* The Christians did not escape these legal murders, constantly perpetrated by the orders of Valentinian. In Milan, the place where three obscure victims were buried, was called ad Innocentes. When he had condemned the decurions of three towns to be put to death, in a remonstrance against their execution, it was stated that they would be worshipped as martyrs by the Christians. Amm. Marc. xxvii. 7.

BOOK III.

his wife, Maximia, against three obscure persons for attempting their lives by magical arts: of these, one was a soothsayer.* Cruel tortures extorted from these miserable men a wild string of charges at once against persons of the highest rank and of the basest degree. All had tampered with unlawful arts, and mingled up with them the crimes of murder, poisoning, and adultery. A general charge of magic hung over the whole city. Maximin poured these dark rumours into the greedy ear of Valentinian, and obtained the authority which he coveted, for making a strict inquisition into these offences, for exacting evidence by torture from men of every rank and station, and for condemning them to a barbarous and ignominious death. The crime of magic was declared of equal enormity with treason; the rights of Roman citizenship, and the special privileges granted by the imperial edicts, were suspended†; neither the person of senator nor dignitary was sacred against the scourge or the rack. The powers of this extraordinary commission were exercised with the utmost latitude and most implacable severity. Anonymous accusations were received; Maximin was understood to have declared that no one should be esteemed innocent whom he chose to find guilty. But the details of this persecution belong to our history only as far as they relate to religion. On general grounds, it may be inferred, that the chief brunt of this sanguinary persecution fell on the Pagan party. Magic, al-

* Haruspex. † Juris prisci justitia et divorum arbitria. Amm. Marc.

though, even at that time, perhaps, the insatiate curiosity about the future, the indelible passion for supernatural excitement, even more criminal designs, might betray some few professed Christians into this direct treason against their religion, was a crime which, in general, would have been held in dread and abhorrence by the members of the church. In the laws it is invariably denounced as a Pagan crime. The aristocracy of Rome were the chief victims of Maximin's cruelty, and in this class, till its final extinction, was the stronghold of Paganism. It is not assuming too much influence to the Christianity of that age, to consider the immoralities and crimes, the adulteries and the poisonings, which were mingled up with these charges of magic, as the vestiges of the old unpurified Roman manners. The Christianity of that period ran into the excess of monastic asceticism, for which the enthusiasm, to judge from the works of St. Jerom, was at its height; and this violation of nature had not yet produced its remote but apparently inevitable consequence — dissoluteness of morals. In almost every case recorded by the historian may be traced indications of Pagan religious usages. A soothsayer, as it has appeared, was involved in the first criminal charge. While his meaner accomplices were beaten to death by straps loaded with lead, the judge having bound himself by an oath that they should neither die by fire nor steel, the soothsayer, to whom he had made no such pledge, was burned alive. The affair of Hymettius betrays the same connection with the ancient religion. Hymettius

Connection of these crimes with Paganism.

BOOK III.

had been accused, seemingly without justice, of malversation in his office of proconsul of Africa, in the supplies of corn to the metropolis. A celebrated soothsayer (haruspex), named Amantius, was charged with offering sacrifices, by the command of Hymettius, with some unlawful or treasonable design. Amantius resisted the torture with unbroken courage, but among his papers was found a writing of Hymettius, of which one part contained bitter invectives against the avaricious and cruel Valentinian; the other implored him, by sacrifices, to induce the gods to mitigate the anger of both the Emperors. Amantius suffered capital punishment. A youth named Lollianus, convicted of inconsiderately copying a book of magic incantations, and condemned to exile, had the rashness to appeal to the Emperor, and suffered death. Lollianus was the son of Lampadius, formerly præfect of Rome*, and, for his zeal for the restoration of the ancient buildings, and his vanity in causing his own name to be inscribed on them, was called the Lichen. Lampadius, was probably a Pagan. The leader of that party, Prætextatus, whose unimpeachable character maintained the universal respect of all parties, was the head of a deputation to the Emperor †, entreating him that the punishment might be proportionate to the offences, and claiming for the senatorial order their immemorial exemption from the unusual and illegal application of torture. On the

* Tillemont thinks Lampadius to have been a Christian; but his reasons are to me inconclusive.

† Amm. Marc. xxvii. 1. &c.

whole, this relentless and sanguinary inquisition into the crime of magic, enveloping in one dreadful proscription a large proportion of the higher orders of Rome and of the West, even if not directly, must, incidentally, have weakened the cause of Paganism; connected it in many minds with dark and hateful practices; and altogether increased the deepening animosity against it.

In the East, the fate of Paganism was still more adverse. There is strong ground for supposing that the rebellion of Procopius was connected with the revival of Julian's party. It was assiduously rumoured abroad that Procopius had been designated as his successor by the expiring Julian. Procopius, before the soldiery, proclaimed himself the relative and heir of Julian.* The astrologers had predicted the elevation of Procopius to the greatest height — of empire, as his partisans fondly hoped, — of misery, as the ingenious seers expounded the meaning of their oracle after his death.† The Pagan and philosophic party were more directly and exclusively implicated in the fatal event, which was disclosed to the trembling Valens at Antioch, and brought as wide and relentless desolation on the East as the cruelty of Maximin on the West. It was mingled up with treasonable designs against the throne and the life of the Emperor. The magical ceremony of divination, which was denounced before Valens, was

In the East, rebellion of Procopius. A. D. 365.

A. D. 368.

* Amm. Marc. xxvi. 6.

† See Le Beau, iii. p. 250. "Ωστε αὐτὸν τῶν ἐπὶ ταῖς μεγίσταις ἀρχαῖς γνωρισθέντων, ἐν τῷ μεγέθει τῆς συμφορᾶς γενέσθαι διασημότερον. He was deceived by the Genethliaci. Greg. Nyss. de Fato.

BOOK III.

Pagan throughout all its dark and mysterious circumstances.* The tripod on which the conspirators performed their ill-omened rites was modelled after that at Delphi; it was consecrated by magic songs and frequent and daily ceremonies, according to the established ritual. The house where the rite was held was purified by incense; a kind of charger made of mixed metals was placed upon the altar, around the rim of which were letters at certain intervals. The officiating diviner wore the habit of a Heathen priest, the linen garments, sandals, and a fillet wreathed round his head, and held a sprig of an auspicious plant in his hand; he chanted the accustomed hymn to Apollo, the god of prophecy. The divination was performed by a ring running round on a slender thread and pointing to certain letters, which formed an oracle in heroic verse, like those of Delphi. The fatal prophecy then pointed to the three first and the last letters of a name, like *Theo*dorus, as the fated successor of Valens.

Among the innumerable victims to the fears and the vengeance of Valens, whom the ordinary prisons were not capacious enough to contain, those who either were, or were suspected of having been entrusted with the fatal secret, were almost all the chiefs of the philosophic party. Hilary of Phrygia, with whom is associated, by one historian, Patricius of Lydia, and Andronicus of Caria, all men of the most

* Philostorgius describes it as a prediction of the Gentile oracles. Τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν χρηστηρίων. Lib. viii. c. 15.

I cannot but suspect that the prohibition of sacrifice mentioned by Libanius, which seems contrary to the general policy of the brothers, and was but partially carried into execution, may have been connected with these transactions.

profound learning*, and skilled in divination, were those who had been consulted on that unpardoned and unpardonable offence, the enquiring the name of the successor to the reigning sovereign. They were, in fact, the conductors of the magic ceremony, and on their confession betrayed the secret circumstances of the incantation. Some, among whom appears the name of Iamblichus, escaped by miracle from torture and execution.† Libanius himself (it may be observed, as evidence how closely magic and philosophy were mingled up together in the popular opinion) had already escaped with difficulty two charges of unlawful practices‡; on this occasion, to the general surprise, he had the same good fortune: either the favour or the clemency of the Emperor, or some interest with the general accusers of his friends, exempted him from the common peril. Of those whose sufferings are recorded, Pasiphilus resisted the extremity of torture rather than give evidence against an innocent man: that man was Eutropius, who held the rank of proconsul of Asia. Simonides, though but a youth, was one of the most austere disciples of philosophy. He boldly admitted that he was cognisant of the dangerous secret, but he kept it undivulged. Simonides was judged worthy of a more barbarous death than the rest; he was condemned to be burned alive; and the martyr of philosophy calmly ascended the funeral pile. The fate of Maximus, since the death of Julian, had

* Zosimus, iv. 15.
† See Zonaras, 13. 2.
‡ Vit. i. 114.

BOOK III.

been marked with strange vicissitude. With Priscus, on the accession of Valentinian, he was summoned before the imperial tribunal; the blameless Priscus was dismissed, but Maximus, who, according to his own friends, had displayed, during the life of Julian, a pomp and luxuriousness unseemly in a philosopher, was sent back to Ephesus and amerced in a heavy fine, utterly disproportioned to philosophic poverty. The fine was mitigated, but, in its diminished amount, exacted by cruel tortures. Maximus, in his agony, entreated his wife to purchase poison to rid him of his miserable life. The wife obeyed, but insisted on taking the first draught: — she drank, expired, and Maximus — declined to drink. He was so fortunate as to attract the notice of Clearchus, proconsul of Asia; he was released from his bonds; rose in wealth and influence, returned to Constantinople; and resumed his former state. The fatal secret had been communicated to Maximus. He had the wisdom, his partisans declared the prophetic foresight, to discern the perilous consequences of the treason. He predicted the speedy death of himself and of all who were in possession of the secret. He added, it is said, a more wonderful oracle; that the Emperor himself would soon perish by a strange death, and not even find burial. Maximus was apprehended and carried to Antioch. After a hasty trial, in which he confessed his knowledge of the oracle, but declared that he esteemed it unworthy of a philosopher to divulge a secret entrusted to him by his friends, he was taken back to Ephesus, and there executed with all

the rest of his party who were implicated in the conspiracy. Festus, it is said, who presided over the execution, was haunted in after life by a vision of Maximus dragging him to judgment before the infernal deities.* Though a despiser of the gods, a Christian, he was compelled by his terrors to sacrifice to the Eumenides, the avengers of blood; and having so done, he fell down dead. So completely did the cause of the Pagan deities appear involved with that of the persecuted philosophers.

Nor was this persecution without considerable influence on the literature of Greece. So severe an inquisition was instituted into the possession of magical books, that, in order to justify their sanguinary proceedings, vast heaps of manuscripts relating to law and general literature were publicly burned, as if they contained unlawful matter. Many men of letters throughout the East, in their terror destroyed their whole libraries, lest some innocent or unsuspected work should be seized by the ignorant or malicious informer, and bring them unknowingly within the relentless penalties of the law.† From this period, philosophy is almost extinct, and Paganism, in the East, drags on its silent and inglorious existence, deprived of its literary aristocracy, and opposing only the inert resistance of habit to the triumphant energy of Christianity.

* Eunap. Vit. Maxim. Amm. Marc. xxix. 1.

† Amm. Marcell. xxix. 1. Inde factum est per Orientales provincias, ut omnes metu similium exurerent libraria omnia: tantus universos invaserat terror. xxix. 2. Compare Heyne, note on Zosimus.

BOOK III.

State of Christianity in the East.

Arianism, under the influence of Valens, maintained its ascendancy in the East. Throughout the whole of that division of the empire, the two forms of Christianity still subsisted in irreconcileable hostility. Almost every city had two prelates, each at the head of his separate communion; the one, according to the powers or the numbers of his party, assuming the rank and title of the legitimate bishop, and looking down, though with jealous animosity, on his factious rival. During the life of Athanasius the see of Alexandria remained faithful to the Trinitarian doctrines. For a short period, indeed, the prelate was obliged to retire, during what is called his fifth exile, to the tomb of his father, but he was speedily welcomed back by the acclamations of his followers, and the baffled imperial authority acquiesced in his peaceful rule till his decease. But at his death, five years afterwards, were renewed the old scenes of discord and bloodshed. Palladius, the præfect of Egypt, received the imperial commission to install the Arian prelate, Lucius, on the throne of Alexandria. Palladius was a Pagan, and the Catholic writers bitterly reproach their rivals with this monstrous alliance. It was rumoured that the Pagan population welcomed the Arian prelate with hymns of gratulation as the friend of the god Serapis, as the restorer of his worship.

A.D. 373.

A. D. 370.

In Constantinople, Valens had received baptism from Eudoxus, the aged Arian prelate of that see. Sacerdotal influence once obtained over the feeble mind of Valens, was likely to carry him to any

extreme; yet, on the other hand, he might be restrained and overawed by calm and dignified resistance. In general, therefore, he might yield himself up as an instrument to the passions, jealousies, and persecuting violence of his own party; while he might have recourse to violence to place Demophilus on the episcopal throne of Constantinople, he might be *awed* into a more tolerant and equitable tone by the eloquence and commanding character of Basil. It is unjust to load the memory of Valens with the most atrocious crime which has been charged upon him by the vindictive exaggeration of his triumphant religious adversaries. As a deputation of eighty Catholic ecclesiastics of Constantinople were returning from Nicomedia, the vessel was burned, the crew took to the boat, the ecclesiastics perished to a man. As no one escaped to tell the tale, and the crew, if accomplices, were not likely to accuse themselves, we may fairly doubt the assertion that orders had been secretly issued by Valens to perpetrate this wanton barbarity.

Interview with Basil.

The memorable interview with Saint Basil, as it is related by the Catholic party, displays, if the weakness, certainly the patience and toleration, of the sovereign — if the uncompromising firmness of the prelate, some of that leaven of pride with which he is taunted by Jerome.

During his circuit through the Asiatic provinces, the Emperor approached the city of Cæsarea in Cappadocia. Modestus, the violent and unscrupulous favourite of Valens, was sent before, to persuade the bishop to submit to the religion of the

BOOK III.

A. D. 371.

Emperor. Basil was inflexible. "Know you not," said the offended officer, "that I have power to strip you of all your possessions, to banish you, to deprive you of life?" "He," answered Basil, "who possesses nothing can lose nothing; all you can take from me is the wretched garments I wear, and the few books, which are my only wealth. As to exile, the earth is the Lord's; every where it will be my country, or rather my place of pilgrimage. Death will be a mercy; it will but admit me into life: long have I been dead to this world." Modestus expressed his surprise at this unusual tone of intrepid address. "You have never, then," replied the prelate, "conversed before with a bishop?" Modestus returned to his master. "Violence will be the only course with this man, who is neither to be appalled by menaces nor won by blandishments." But the Emperor shrunk from violent measures. His humbler supplication confined itself to the admission of Arians into the communion of Basil; but he implored in vain. The Emperor mingled with the crowd of undistinguished worshippers; but he was so impressed by the solemnity of the Catholic service, the deep and full chanting of the psalms, the silent adoration of the people, the order and the majesty, by the calm dignity of the bishop and of his attendant clergy, which appeared more like the serenity of angels than the busy scene of mortal men, that, awe-struck and overpowered, he scarcely ventured to approach to make his offering. The clergy stood irresolute, whether they were to receive it from the infectious hand of an Arian; Basil, at length, while the trembling

CHAP. VII.

Emperor leaned for support on an attendant priest, condescended to advance and accept the oblation. But neither supplications, nor bribes, nor threats, could induce the bishop to admit the sovereign to the communion. In a personal interview, instead of convincing the bishop, Valens was so overpowered by the eloquence of Basil, as to bestow an endowment on the church for the use of the poor. A scene of mingled intrigue and asserted miracle ensued. The exile of Basil was determined, but the mind of Valens was alarmed by the dangerous illness of his son. The prayers of Basil were said to have restored the youth to life; but a short time after, having been baptized by Arian hands, he relapsed and died. Basil however maintained his place and dignity to the end.*

Effect of Christianity in mitigating the evils of barbarian invasion.

But the fate of Valens drew on; it was followed by the first permanent establishment of the barbarians within the frontiers of the Roman empire. Christianity now began to assume a new and important function, that assimilation and union between the conquerors and the conquered, which prevented the total extinction of the Roman civilisation, and the oppression of Europe, by complete and almost hopeless barbarism. However Christianity might have disturbed the peace, and therefore, in some degree, the stability of the empire, by the religious factions which distracted the principal cities; however that foreign principle of celibacy, which had now become completely identified with it, by withdrawing so many active and

* Greg. Naz. Orat. xx.; Greg. Nyss. contra Eunom.; and the ecclesiastical historians in loco.

BOOK III.

powerful minds into the cloister or the hermitage, may have diminished the civil energies, and even have impaired the military forces of the empire*, yet the enterprising and victorious religion amply repaid those injuries by its influence in remodelling the new state of society. If treacherous to the interests of the Roman empire, it was true to those of mankind. Throughout the whole process of the resettling of Europe and the other provinces of the empire, by the migratory tribes from the north and east, and the vast system of colonisation and conquest, which introduced one or more new races into every province, Christianity was the one common bond, the harmonising principle, which subdued to something like unity the adverse and conflicting elements of society. Christianity, no doubt, while it discharged this lofty mission, could not but undergo a great and desecrating change. It might repress, but could not altogether subdue, the advance of barbarism; it was constrained to accommodate itself to the spirit of the times; while struggling to counteract barbarism, itself became barbarised. It lost at once much of its purity and its gentleness; it became splendid and imaginative, warlike, and at length chivalrous. When a country in a comparatively high state of civilisation is overrun by a foreign and martial horde, in numbers too great to

* Valens, perceiving the actual operation of this unwarlike dedication of so many able-bodied men to useless inactivity, attempted to correct the evil by law, and by the strong interference of the government. He invaded the monasteries and solitary hermitages of Egypt, and swept the monks by thousands into the ranks of his army. But a reluctant Egyptian monk would, in general, make but an indifferent soldier.

be absorbed by the local population, the conquerors usually establish themselves as a kind of armed aristocracy, while the conquered are depressed into a race of slaves. Where there is no connecting, no intermediate power, the two races co-exist in stern and irreconcileable hostility. The difference in privilege, and often in the territorial possession of the land, is increased and rendered more strongly marked by the total want of communion in blood. Intermarriages, if not, as commonly, prohibited by law, are almost entirely discountenanced by general opinion. Such was, in fact, the ordinary process in the formation of the society which arose out of the ruins of the Roman empire. The conquerors became usually a military aristocracy; assumed the property in the conquered lands, or, at least, a considerable share in the landed estates, and laid the groundwork, as it were, for that feudal system which was afterwards developed with more or less completeness in different countries of Europe.

Influence of the clergy.

One thing alone in some cases, tempered, during the process of conquest, the irreclaimable hostility; in all, after the final settlement, moulded up together in some degree the adverse powers. Where, as in the Gothic invasion, it had made some previous impression on the invading race, Christianity was constantly present, silently mitigating the horrors of the war, and afterwards blending together, at least to a certain extent, the rival races. At all times, it became the connecting link, the intermediate power, which gave some community

BOOK III.

of interest, some similarity of feeling, to the master and the slave. They worshipped at least the same God, in the same church; and the care of the same clergy embraced both with something of an harmonising and equalising superintendence. The Christian clergy occupied a singular position in this new state of society. At the earlier period, they were, in general, Roman; later, though sometimes barbarian by birth, they were Roman in education. When the prostration of the conquered people was complete, there was still an order of people, not strictly belonging to either race, which maintained a commanding attitude, and possessed certain authority. The Christian bishop confronted the barbarian sovereign, or took his rank among the leading nobles. During the invasion, the Christian clergy, though their possessions were ravaged in the indiscriminate warfare; though their persons were not always secure from insult, or from slavery; yet, on the whole, retained, or very soon resumed, a certain sanctity, and hastened, before long, to wind their chains around the minds of the conquerors. Before a new invasion, Christianity had, in general, mingled up the invaders with the invaded; till at length Europe, instead of being a number of disconnected kingdoms, hostile in race, in civil polity, in religion, was united in a kind of federal Christian republic, on a principle of unity, acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope.

Their importance in this new state of things.

The overweening authority claimed and exercised by the clergy; their existence as a separate and exclusive caste, at this particular period in the

progress of civilisation, became of the highest utility. A religion without a powerful and separate sacerdotal order, even, perhaps, if that order had not in general been bound to celibacy, and so prevented from degenerating into an hereditary caste, would have been absorbed and lost in the conflict and confusion of the times. Religion, unless invested by general opinion in high authority, and that authority asserted by an active and incorporated class, would scarcely have struggled through this complete disorganisation of all the existing relations of society. The respect which the clergy maintained was increased by their being almost the exclusive possessors of that learning which commands the reverence even of barbarians, when not actually engaged in war. A religion which rests on a written record, however that record may be but rarely studied, and by a few only of its professed interpreters, enforces the general respect to literary attainment. Though the traditional commentary may overload or supersede the original book, the commentary itself is necessarily committed to writing, and becomes another subject of honoured and laborious study. All other kinds of literature, as far as they survive, gladly rank themselves under the protection of that which commands reverence for its religious authority. The cloister or the religious foundation thus became the place of refuge to all that remained of letters or of arts. Knowledge brooded in secret, though almost with unproductive, yet with life-sustaining warmth, over these secluded treasures. But it was not merely an

Influence of Christianity on literature,

BOOK III.

inert and quiescent resistance which was thus offered to barbarism; it was perpetually extending its encroachments, as well as maintaining its place. Perhaps the degree to which the Roman language modified the Teutonic tongues may be a fair example of the extent to which the Roman civilisation generally modified the manners and the laws of the Northern nations.

on language,

The language of the conquered people lived in the religious ritual. Throughout the rapid succession of invaders who passed over Europe, seeking their final settlement, some in the remotest province of Africa, before the formation of other dialects, the Latin was kept alive as the language of Western Christianity. The clergy were its conservators, the Vulgate Bible and the offices of the church its depositaries, unviolated by any barbarous interruption, respected as the oracles of divine truth. But the constant repetition of this language in the ears of the mingled people can scarcely have been without influence, in increasing and strengthening the Roman element in the common language, which gradually grew up from mutual intercourse, intermarriage, and all the other bonds of community which blended together the various races.

on the municipal institutions.

The old municipal institutions of the empire probably owed their permanence, in no inconsiderable degree, to Christianity. It has been observed in what manner the decurionate, the municipal authorities of each town, through the extraordinary and oppressive system of taxation, from guardians of the liberties of the people, became mere passive and

unwilling agents of the government. Responsible for payments which they could not exact, men of opulence, men of humanity, shrunk from the public offices. From objects of honourable ambition, they had become burdens, loaded with unrepaid unpopularity, assumed by compulsion, and exercised with reluctance. The *defensors*, instituted by Valentinian and Valens, however they might afford temporary protection and relief to the lower orders, scarcely exercised any long or lasting influence on the state of society. Yet the municipal authorities at least retained the power of administering the laws; and, as the law became more and more impregnated with Christian sentiment, it assumed something of a religious as well as civil authority. The magistrate became, as it were, an ally of the Christian bishop; the institutions had a sacred character, besides that of their general utility. Whatever remained of commerce and of art subsisted chiefly among the old Roman population of the cities, which was already Christian; and hence, perhaps, the guilds and fraternities of the trades, which may be traced up to an early period, gradually assumed a sort of religious bond of union. In all points, the Roman civilisation and Christianity, when the latter had completely pervaded the various orders of men, began to make common cause; and during all the time that this disorganisation of conquest and new settlement was taking place in this groundwork of the Roman *social* system, and the loose elements of society were severing by gradual disunion, a new confederative

BOOK III.

principle arose in these smaller aggregations, as well as in the general population of the empire. The church became another centre of union. Men incorporated themselves together, not only, nor so much, as fellow-citizens, as fellow-Christians. They submitted to an authority co-ordinate with the civil power, and united as members of the same religious fraternity.

on general habits.

Christianity, to a certain degree, changed the general habits of men. For a time, at least, they were less public, more private and domestic men. The tendency of Christianity, while the Christians composed a separate and distinct community, to withdraw men from public affairs; their less frequent attendance on the courts of law, which were superseded by their own peculiar arbitration; their repugnance to the ordinary amusements, which soon however, in the large cities, such as Antioch and Constantinople, wore off — all these principles of disunion ceased to operate when Christianity became the dominant, and at length the exclusive, religion. The Christian community became the people; the shows, the pomps, the ceremonial of the religion, replaced the former seasons of periodical popular excitement; the amusements, which were not extirpated by the change of sentiment, some theatrical exhibitions and the chariot race, were crowded with Christian spectators, Christians ascended the tribunals of law; not only the spirit and language of the New Testament, but likewise of the Old, entered both into the Roman jurisprudence and into the various barbarian codes, in which the Roman law was

CHAP. VII.

mingled with the old Teutonic usages. Thus Christianity was perpetually discharging the double office of conservator, with regard to the social institutions with which she had entered into alliance; and of mediator between the conflicting races which she was gathering together under her own wing. Where the relation between the foreign conqueror and the conquered inhabitant of the empire was that of master and slave, the Roman ecclesiastic still maintained his independence, and speedily regained his authority; he only admitted the barbarian into his order on the condition that he became to a certain degree Romanised; and there can be no doubt that the gentle influence of Christian charity and humanity was not without its effect in mitigating the lot, or at least in consoling the misery of the change from independence, or superiority, to humiliation and servitude. Where the two races mingled, as seems to have been the case in some of the towns and cities, on more equal terms, by strengthening the municipal institutions with something of a religious character, and by its own powerful federative principle, it condensed them much more speedily into one people, and assimilated their manners, habits, and usages.

Early Christianity among the Goths.

Christianity had early, as it were, prepared the way for this amalgamation of the Goths with the Roman empire. In their first inroads, during the reign of Gallienus, when they ravaged a large part of the Roman empire, they carried away numbers of slaves, especially from Asia Minor and Cappadocia. Among these were many Christians. The

BOOK III.

slaves subdued the conquerors; the gentle doctrines of Christianity made their way to the hearts of the barbarous warriors. The families of the slaves continued to supply the priesthood to this growing community. A Gothic bishop*, with a Greek name, Theophilus, attended at the council of Nice; Ulphilas, at the time of the invasion in the reign of Valens, consecrated bishop of the Goths during an embassy to Constantinople, was of Cappadocian descent.† Among the Goths, Christianity first assumed its new office, the advancement of general civilisation, as well as of purer religion. It is difficult to suppose that the art of writing was altogether unknown to the Goths before the time of Ulphilas. The language seems to have attained a high degree of artificial perfection before it was employed by that prelate in the translation of the Scriptures.‡ Still the Mæso-Gothic alphabet, of which the Greek is by far the principal element, was generally adopted by the Goths.§ It was universally disseminated; it was perpetuated, until the extinction or absorption of the Gothic race in

Ulphilas's version of the Scriptures.

* Philostorgius, ii. 5.

† Socrates, ii. 41.

‡ The Gothic of Ulphilas is the link between the East and Europe, the transition state from the Sanscrit to the modern Teutonic languages. It is possible that the Goths, after their migration from the East to the north of Germany, may have lost the art of writing, partly from the want of materials. The German forests would afford no substitute for the palm-leaves of the East; they may have been reduced to the barbarous runes of the other Heathen tribes. Compare Bopp., Conjugations System.

§ The Mæso-Gothic alphabet has twenty-five letters, of which fifteen are evidently Greek, eight Latin. The two, th and hw, to which the Greek and Latin have no corresponding sound, are derived from some other quarter. They are most likely ancient characters. The th resembles closely the runic letter, which expresses the same sound. See St. Martin, note on Le Beau, iii. p. 120.

other tribes, by the translation of the sacred writings. This was the work of Ulphilas, who, in his version of the Scriptures*, is reported to have omitted, with a Christian, but vain, precaution, the books of Kings, lest, being too congenial to the spirit of his countrymen, they should inflame their warlike enthusiasm. Whether the genuine mildness of Christianity, or some patriotic reverence for the Roman empire, from which he drew his descent, influenced the pious bishop, the martial ardour of the Goths was not the less fatal to the stability of the Roman empire. Christianity did not even mitigate the violence of the shock with which, for the first time, a whole host of Northern barbarians was thrown upon the empire, never again to be shaken off. This Gothic invasion, which first established a Teutonic nation within the frontier of the empire, was conducted with all the ferocity, provoked, indeed, on the part of the Romans by the basest treachery, of hostile races with no bond of connection.†

* The greater part of the fragments of Ulphilas's version of the Scriptures now extant is contained in the celebrated Codex Argenteus, now at Upsala. This splendid MS., written in silver letters, on parchment of a purple ground, contains almost the whole four Gospels. Knittel, in 1762, discovered five chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in a Palinpsest MS. at Wolfenbuttel. The best edition of the whole of this is by J. Christ. Zahn. Weissenfels, 1805. Since that time, M. Mai has published, from Milan Palinpsests, several other fragments, chiefly of the other Epistles of St. Paul. Milan, 1819. St. Martin, notes to Le Beau, iii. 100. On the Gothic translation of the Scriptures. See Socrat. iv. 33. Sozom. vi. 37. Philostorgius, ii. 5. Compare Theodoret, v. 30, 31.

† It is remarkable to find a Christian priest employed as an ambassador between the Goths and the Romans, and either the willing or undesigning instrument of that stratagem of the Gothic general which was so fatal to Valens. Amm. Marc. xxxi. 12.

BOOK III.

Arianism of the Goths.

The pacificatory effect of the general conversion of the Goths to Christianity was impeded by the form of faith which they embraced. The Gothic prelates, Ulphilas among the rest, who visited the court of Constantinople, found the Arian bishops in possession of the chief authority; they were the recognised prelates of the empire. Whether their less cultivated minds were unable to comprehend, or their language to express, the fine and subtle distinctions of the Trinitarian faith, or persuaded, as it was said, by the Arian bishops, that it was mere verbal dispute, these doctrines were introduced among the Goths before their passage of the Danube, or their settlement within the empire. The whole nation received this form of Christianity; from them it appears to have spread, first embracing the other branch of the nation, the Ostrogoths, among the Gepidæ, the Vandals, and the Burgundians.* Among the barbaric conquerors was the stronghold of Arianism; while it was gradually repudiated by the Romans both in the East and in the West, it raised its head, and obtained a superiority which it had never before attained, in Italy and Spain. Whether more congenial to the simplicity of the barbaric mind, or in some respects cherished on one side by the conqueror as a proud distinction, more cordially detested by the Roman population, as the creed of their barbarous masters, Arianism

* Sic quoque Visigothi a Valente Imperatore Ariani potius quam Christiani effecti. De cætero tam Ostrogothis, quam Gepidis parentibus suis per affectionis gratiam evangelizantes, hujus perfidiæ culturam edocentes omnem ubique linguæ hujus nationem ad culturam hujus sectæ incitavere. Jornand. c. 25.

appeared almost to make common cause with the Teutonic invaders, and only fell with the Gothic monarchies in Italy and in Spain. While Gratian and Valentinian the Second espoused the cause of Trinitarianism in the West (we shall hereafter resume the Christian history of that division of the empire), by measures which show that their sacerdotal advisers were men of greater energy and decision than their civil ministers, it subsisted almost as a foreign and barbarous form of Christianity.

CHAPTER VIII.

THEODOSIUS. ABOLITION OF PAGANISM.

The fate of Valens summoned to the empire a sovereign not merely qualified to infuse a conservative vigour into the civil and military administration of the empire, but to compress into one uniform system the religion of the Roman world. It was necessary that Christianity should acquire a complete predominance, and that it should be consolidated into one vigorous and harmonious system. The relegation, as it were, of Arianism among the Goths and other barbarous tribes, though it might thereby gain a temporary accession of strength, did not permanently impede the final triumph of Trinitarianism. While the imperial power was thus lending its strongest aid for the complete triumph and concentration of Christianity, from the peculiar character of the mind of Theodosius, the sacerdotal order, on the strength and unity of which was to rest the permanent influence of Christianity during the approaching centuries of darkness, assumed new energy. A religious emperor, under certain circumstances, might have been the most dangerous adversary of the priestly power; he would have asserted with vigour, which could not at that time be resisted, the supremacy of the civil authority. But

the weaknesses, the vices, of the great Theodosius, bowed him down before the aspiring priesthood, who, in asserting and advancing their own authority, were asserting the cause of humanity. The passionate tyrant, at the feet of the Christian prelate, deploring the rash resentment which had condemned a whole city to massacre; the prelate exacting the severest penance for the outrage on justice and on humanity, stand in extraordinary contrast with the older Cæsars, without remonstrance or without humiliation, glutting their lusts or their resentment with the misery and blood of their subjects.

A. D. 379. The accession of Theodosius was hailed with universal enthusiasm throughout the empire. The pressing fears of barbaric invasion on every frontier silenced for a time the jealousies of Christian and Pagan, of Arian and Trinitarian. On the shore of each of the great rivers which bounded the empire, appeared a host of menacing invaders. The Persians, the Armenians, the Iberians, were prepared to pass the Euphrates or the eastern frontier; the Danube had already afforded a passage to the Goths; behind them were the Huns in still more formidable and multiplying swarms; the Franks and the rest of the German nations were crowding to the Rhine. Paganism, as well as Christianity, hastened to pay its grateful homage to the deliverer of the empire; the eloquent Themistius addressed the Emperor in the name of the imperial city; Libanius ventured to call on the Christian Emperor to revenge the death of Julian, that crime for which the gods were exacting

just retribution; Pagan poetry awoke from its long silence; the glory of Theodosius and his family inspired its last noble effort in the verse of Claudian.

Theodosius was a Spaniard. In that province Christianity had probably found less resistance from the feeble provincial Paganism; nor was there, as in Gaul, an old national religion which lingered in the minds of the native population. Christianity was early and permanently established in the Peninsula. To Theodosius, who was but slightly tinged with the love of letters, or the tastes of a more liberal education, the colossal temples of the East, or the more graceful and harmonious fabrics of Europe, would probably create no feeling but that of aversion from the shrines of idolatry. His Christianity was pure from any of the old Pagan associations; unsoftened, it may, perhaps, be said, by any feeling for art, and unawed by any reverence for the ancient religion of Rome: he was a soldier, a provincial, an hereditary Christian of a simple and unquestioning faith; and he added to all this the consciousness of consummate vigour and ability, and a choleric and vehement temperament.

Spain, throughout the Trinitarian controversy, perhaps from the commanding influence of Hosius, had firmly adhered to the Athanasian doctrines. The Manichean tenets, for which Priscillian and his followers suffered (the first heretics condemned to death for their opinions), were but recently introduced into the province.

Thus, by character and education, deeply im-

pressed with Christianity, and that of a severe and uncompromising orthodoxy, Theodosius undertook the sacred obligation of extirpating Paganism, and restoring to Christianity its severe and inviolable unity. Without tracing the succession of events throughout his reign, we may survey the Christian Emperor in his acts; first, as commencing, if not completing, the forcible extermination of Paganism; secondly, as confirming Christianity, and extending the authority of the sacerdotal order; and thirdly, as establishing the uniform orthodoxy of the Western Roman church.

Hostility of Theodosius to Paganism.

The laws of Theodosius against the Pagan sacrifices grew insensibly more and more severe. The inspection of the entrails of victims, and magic rites, were made a capital offence. In 391, issued an edict prohibiting sacrifices, and even the entering into the temples. In the same year, a rescript was addressed to the court and præfect of Egypt, fining the governors of provinces who should enter a temple, fifteen pounds of gold, and giving a kind of authority to the subordinate officers to prevent their superiors from committing such offences. The same year, all unlawful sacrifices are prohibited by night or day, within or without the temples. In 392, all immolation is prohibited under the penalty of death, and all other acts of idolatry under forfeiture of the house or land in which the offence shall have been committed.*

The Pagan temples, left standing in all their majesty, but desecrated, deserted, overgrown, would

* Cod. Theod. xvi. 10. 7. 11, 12.

BOOK III.

have been the most splendid monument to the triumph of Christianity. If, with the disdain of conscious strength, she had allowed them to remain without victim, without priest, without worshipper, but uninjured, and only exposed to natural decay from time and neglect, posterity would not merely have been grateful for the preservation of such stupendous and graceful models of art, but would have been strongly impressed with admiration of her magnanimity. But such magnanimity was neither to be expected from the age or the state of the religion. The Christians believed in the existence of the Heathen deities, with, perhaps, more undoubting faith than the Heathens themselves. The dæmons who inhabited the temples were spirits of malignant and pernicious power, which it was no less the interest than the duty of the Christian to expel from their proud and attractive mansions. * The temples were the strongholds of the vigilant and active adversaries of Christian truth and Christian purity, the enemies of God and man. The idols, it is true, were but wood and stone, but the beings they represented were real; they hovered, perhaps, in the air; they were still present in the consecrated spot, though rebuked and controlled by the mightier name of Christ, yet able to surprise the careless Christian in his hour of supineness or negligent adherence to his faith or his duty. When zeal inflamed the Christian populace to aggression upon any of these ancient and

* Dii enim Gentium dæmonia, ut Scriptura docet. Ambros. Epist. Resp. ad Symmach. in init.

time-hallowed buildings, no doubt some latent awe lingered within; something of the suspense of doubtful warfare watched the issue of the strife. However they might have worked themselves up to the conviction that their ancient gods were but of this inferior and hostile nature, they would still be haunted by some apprehensions, lest they should not be secure of the protection of Christ, or of the angels and saints in the new tutelar hierarchy of Heaven. The old deities might not have been so completely rebuked and controlled as not to retain some power of injuring their rebellious votaries. It was at last, even to the faithful, a conflict between two unequal supernatural agencies, unequal indeed, particularly where the faith of the Christian was fervent and sincere, yet dependent for its event on the confidence of that faith, which sometimes trembled at its own insufficiency, and feared lest it should be abandoned by the divine support in the moment of strife.

Throughout the East and West, the monks were the chief actors in this holy warfare. They are constantly spoken of by the Heathen writers in terms of the bitterest reproach and contempt. The most particular accounts of their proceedings relate to the East. Their desultory attacks were chiefly confined to the country, where the numberless shrines, images, and smaller temples were at the same time less protected, and more dear to the feelings of the people. In the towns, the larger fanes, if less guarded by the reverence of their worshippers, were under the protection of the

BOOK III.

municipal police.* Christianity was long almost exclusively the religion of the towns; and the term Paganism (notwithstanding the difficulties which embarrass this explanation) appears to owe its origin to this general distinction. The agricultural population, liable to frequent vicissitudes, trembled to offend the gods, on whom depended the plenty or the failure of the harvest. Habits are more intimately enwoven with the whole being in the regular labours of husbandry, than in the more various and changeable occupations of the city. The whole Heathen ritual was bound up with the course of agriculture: this was the oldest part both of the Grecian and Italian worship, and had experienced less change from the spirit of the times. In every field, in every garden, stood a deity; shrines and lesser temples were erected in every grove, by every fountain. The drought, the mildew, the murrain, the locusts, — whatever was destructive to the harvest or to the herd, was in the power of these capricious deities†; even when converted to Christianity, the peasant trembled at the consequences of his own apostasy; and it is probable, that not until the whole of this race of tutelary deities had been gradually replaced by what we must call the inferior divinities of Paganising Christianity, saints, martyrs, and angels, that Christianity was extensively or permanently established in the rural districts. ‡

* Τολμᾶται μὲν οὖν κἂν ταῖς πόλεσι, τὸ πολὺ δὲ εν τοῖς ἀγροῖς. Liban. pro Templis.

† Καὶ τοῖς γεωργοῦσιν ἐν αὐτοῖς αἱ ἐλπίδες, ὅσαι περὶ τε ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν, καὶ τέκνων καὶ βοῶν, καὶ τῆς σπειρομένης γῆς καὶ πεφυτευμένης. Liban. de Templ.

‡ This difference prevailed equally in the West. Fleury gives

CHAP. VIII.

Alienation of the revenue of the temples.

During the reign of Constantine, that first sign of a decaying religion, the alienation of the property attached to its maintenance, began to be discerned. Some estates belonging to the temples were seized by the first Christian Emperor, and appropriated to the building of Constantinople. The favourites of his successor, as we have seen, were enriched by the donation of other sacred estates, and even of the temples themselves.* Julian restored the greater part of these prodigal gifts, but they were once more resumed under Valentinian, and the estates escheated to the imperial revenue. Soon after the accession of Theodosius, the Pagans, particularly in the East, saw the storm gathering in the horizon. The monks, with perfect impunity, traversed the rural districts, demolishing all the unprotected edifices. In vain did the Pagans appeal to the episcopal authority; the bishops declined to repress the over-active, perhaps, but pious zeal of their adherents. Already much destruction had taken place among the smaller rural shrines; the temples in Antioch, of Fortune, of Jove, of Athene, of Dionysus, were still standing; but the demolition of one stately temple, either at Edessa or Palmyra, and this under the

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an account of the martyrdom of three missionaries by the rural population of a district in the Tyrol, who resented the abolition of their deities and their religious ceremonies. Hist. Eccles. v. 64.

* They were bestowed, according to Libanius, with no more respect than a horse, a slave, a dog, or a golden cup. The position of the *slave* between the horse and the dog, as cheap gifts, is curious enough. Liban. Op. v. ii. p. 185.

BOOK III.

Oration of Libanius.

pretext of the imperial authority, had awakened all the fears of the Pagans. Libanius addressed an elaborate oration to the Emperor, "For the Temples."* Like Christianity under the Antonines, Paganism is now making its apology for its public worship. Paganism is reduced to still lower humiliation; one of its modest arguments against the destruction of its temples, is an appeal to the taste and love of splendour, in favour of buildings at least as ornamental to the cities as the imperial palaces.† The orator even stoops to suggest that, if alienated from religious uses, and let for profane purposes, they might be a productive source of revenue. But the eloquence and arguments of Libanius were wasted on deaf and unheeding ears. The war against the temples commenced in Syria; but it was not conducted with complete success. In many cities the inhabitants rose in defence of their sacred buildings, and, with the Persian on the frontier, a religious war might have endangered the allegiance of these provinces. The splendid temples, of which the ruins have recently been discovered, at Petra‡, were defended by the zealous worshippers; and in those, as well as at Areopolis and Raphia, in Palestine, the Pagan ceremonial continued without disturbance. In Gaza, the temple of the tutelar deity, Marnas, the lord of men, was closed; but the Christians did not venture to violate it. The

Syrian temples destroyed.

* This oration was probably not delivered in the presence of Theodosius.

† Liban. pro Templis, p. 190.

‡ Laborde's Journey. In most of these buildings Roman architecture of the age of the Antonines is manifest, raised in general on the enormous substructions of much earlier ages.

form of some of the Syrian edifices allowed their transformation into Christian churches; they were enclosed, and made to admit sufficient light for the services of the church. A temple at Damascus, and another at Heliopolis or Baalbec*, were consecrated to the Christian worship. Marcellus of Apamea was the martyr in this holy warfare. He had signalised himself by the destruction of the temples in his own city, particularly that of Jupiter, whose solid foundations defied the artificers and soldiery employed in the work of demolition, and required the aid of miracle to undermine them. But, on an expedition into the district of Apamea, called the Aulon, the rude inhabitants rose in defence of their sacred edifice, seized Marcellus, and burned him alive. The synod of the province refused to revenge on his barbarous enemies, a death so happy for Marcellus, and so glorious for his family.†

The work of demolition was not long content with these less famous edifices, these outworks of Paganism; it aspired to attack one of its strongest citadels, and, by the public destruction of one of the most celebrated temples in the world, to announce that Polytheism had for ever lost its hold upon the minds of men.

It was considered the highest praise of the mag-

* If this (as indeed is not likely) was the vast Temple of the Sun, the work of successive ages, it is probable that a Christian church was enclosed in some part of its precincts. The sanctuary was usually taken for this purpose.

† Sozomen, vii. 15. Theodoret, v. 21.

BOOK III.

Temple of Serapis at Alexandria.

nificent temple in Edessa, of which the roof was of remarkable construction, and which contained in its secret sanctuary certain very celebrated statues of wrought iron, and whose fall had excited the indignant eloquence of Libanius, to compare it to the Serapion in Alexandria. The Serapion, at that time, appeared secure in the superstition, which connected its invoilable sanctity, and the honour of its god*, with the rise and fall of the Nile, with the fertility and existence of Egypt, and, as Egypt was the granary of the East, of Constantinople. The Pagans had little apprehension that the Serapion itself, before many years, would be levelled to the ground.

A. D. 389, or 391.

The temple of Serapis, next to that of Jupiter in the Capitol, was the proudest monument of Pagan religious architecture.† Like the more celebrated structures of the East, and that of Jerusalem in its glory, it comprehended within its precincts a vast mass of buildings, of which the temple itself formed the centre. It was built on an artificial hill, in the old quarter of the city, called Rhacotis, to which the ascent was by a hundred steps. All the substructure was vaulted over; and in these dark chambers, which communicated with each other, were supposed to be carried on the most fearful, and, to the Christian, abominable mysteries. All around the spacious level platform were the habitations of the priests, and the ascetics dedicated to

* Libanius expresses himself to this effect.

† Post Capitolium, quo se venerabilis Roma in æternum attollit nihil orbis terrarum ambitiosius cernat. Ammian. Marcell. xxii. 16.

the worship of the god. Within these outworks of this city, rather than temple, was a square, surrounded on all sides with a magnificent portico. In the centre arose the temple, on pillars of enormous magnitude and beautiful proportion. The work either of Alexander himself or of the first Ptolemy, aspired to unite the colossal grandeur of Egyptian with the fine harmony of Grecian art. The god himself was the especial object of adoration throughout the whole country, and throughout every part of the empire into which the Egyptian worship had penetrated*, but more particularly in Alexandria; and the wise policy of the Ptolemys had blended together, under this pliant and all-embracing religion, the different races of their subjects. Egyptian and Greek met as worshippers of Serapis. The Serapis of Egypt was said to have been worshipped for ages at Sinope; he was transported from that city with great pomp and splendour, to be reincorporated, as it were, and reidentified with his ancient prototype. While the Egyptians worshipped in Serapis the great vivific principle of the universe, the fecundating Nile, holding the Nilometer for his sceptre, the Lord of Amen-ti, the President of the regions beyond the grave; the Greeks, at the same time, recognised the blended attributes of their Dionysus, Helios, Æsculapius, and Hades.†

Worship of Serapis.

* In Egypt alone he had forty-two temples; innumerable others in every part of the Roman empire. Aristid. Orat. in Canop.

† This appears to me the most natural interpretation of the celebrated passage in Tacitus. Compare De Guigniaut, Le Dieu Serapis et son Origine, originally written as a note for Bournouf's Translation of Tacitus.

BOOK III.

Statue of Serapis.

The colossal statue of Serapis embodied these various attributes.* It filled the sanctuary: its outstretched and all-embracing arms touched the walls; the right the one, the left the other. It was said to have been the work of Sesostris; it was made of all the metals fused together, gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin; it was inlaid with all kinds of precious stones; the whole was polished, and appeared of an azure colour. The measure or bushel, the emblem of productiveness or plenty, crowned its head. By its side stood the symbolic three-headed animal, one the forepart of a lion, one of a dog, one of a wolf. In this the Greeks saw the type of their poetic Cerberus.† The serpent, the symbol of eternity, wound round the whole, and returned resting its head on the hand of the god.

The more completely the adoration of Serapis had absorbed the worship of the whole Egyptian pantheon, the more eagerly Christianity desired to triumph over the representative of Polytheism. However, in the time of Hadrian, the philosophic party may have endeavoured to blend and harmonise the two faiths‡, they stood now in their old direct and irreconcileable opposition. The suppression of the internal feuds between the opposite

* The statue is described by Macrobius, Saturn. i 20.; Clemens Alexandrin. Exhortat. ad Gent. i. p. 42.; Rufinus, E. H. xii. 23.

† According to the interpretation of Macrobius, the three heads represented the past, the present, and the future; the rapacious wolf the past, the central lion the intermediate present, the fawning dog the hopeful future.

‡ See the Letter of Hadrian, Vol. II. p. 155.

CHAP. VIII.

The first attacks on Paganism.

parties in Alexandria, enabled Christianity to direct all its concentred force against Paganism. Theophilus, the archbishop, was a man of boldness and activity, eager to seize, and skilful to avail himself of, every opportunity to inflame the popular mind against the Heathens. A priest of Serapis was accused and convicted of practising those licentious designs against the virtue of the female worshippers, so frequently attributed to the priesthood of the Eastern religions. The noblest and most beautiful women were persuaded to submit to the embraces of the god, whose place, under the favourable darkness caused by the sudden extinction of the lamps in the temple, was filled by the priest. These inauspicious rumours prepared the inevitable collision. A neglected temple of Osiris or Dionysus had been granted by Constantius to the Arians of Alexandria. Theophilus obtained from the Emperor a grant of the vacant site, for a new church, to accommodate the increasing numbers of the Catholic Christians. On digging the foundation, there were discovered many of the obscene symbols, used in the Bacchic or Osirian mysteries. Theophilus, with more regard to the success of his cause than to decency, exposed these ludicrous or disgusting objects, in the public market place, to the contempt and abhorrence of the people. The Pagans, indignant at this treatment of their sacred symbols, and maddened by the scorn and ridicule of the Christians, took up arms. The streets ran with blood; and many Christians who fell in this tumultuous fray received the honours of martyr-

BOOK III.

Olympus the philosopher.

dom. A philosopher, named Olympus, placed himself at the head of the Pagan party. Olympus had foreseen and predicted the ruin of the external worship of Polytheism. He had endeavoured to implant a profound feeling in the hearts of the Pagans which might survive the destruction of their ordinary objects of worship. "The statues of the gods are but perishable and material images; the eternal intelligences, which dwelt within them, have withdrawn to the heavens." * Yet Olympus hoped, and at first with his impassioned eloquence succeeded, in rousing his Pagan compatriots to a bold defiance of the public authorities in support of their religion; faction and rivalry supplied what was wanting to faith, and it appeared that Paganism would likewise boast its army of martyrs,—martyrs, not indeed through patient submission to the persecutor, but in heroic despair perishing with their gods.

War in the city.

The Pagans at first were the aggressors; they sallied from their fortress, the Serapion, seized the unhappy Christians whom they met, forced them to sacrifice on their altar, or slew them upon it, or threw them into the deep trench defiled with the blood and offal of sacrifice. In vain Evagrius, the præfect of Egypt, and Romanus, the commander of the troops, appeared before the gates of the Temple, remonstrated with the garrison, who appeared at the windows, against their barbarities,

* Ὕλην φθαρτὴν καὶ ἐνδάλματα λέγων εἶναι τὰ ἀγάλματα, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἀφανισμὸν ὑπομένειν· δυνάμεις δέ τινας ἐνοικῆσαι αὐτοῖς, καὶ εἰς οὐρανὸν ἀποπτῆναι. Sozom. H. E. vii. 15.

and menaced them with the just vengeance of the law. They were obliged to withdraw, baffled and disregarded, and to await the orders of the Emperor. Olympus exhorted his followers to the height of religious heroism. "Having made a glorious sacrifice of our enemies, let us immolate ourselves and perish with our gods." But before the rescript arrived, Olympus had disappeared: he had stolen out of the Temple, and embarked for Italy. The Christian writers do honour to his sagacity, or to his prophetic powers, at the expense of his courage and fidelity to his party. In the dead of night, when all was slumbering around, and all the gates closed, he had heard the Christian Alleluia pealing from a single voice through the silent Temple. He acknowledged the sign, or the omen, and anticipated the unfavourable sentence of the Emperor, the fate of his faction and of his gods.

Flight of Olympus.

The eastern Pagans, it should seem, were little acquainted with the real character of Theodosius. When the rescript arrived they laid down their arms, and assembled in peaceful array before the Temple, as if they expected the sentence of the Emperor in their own favour.* The officer began; the first words of the rescript plainly intimated the abhorrence of Theodosius against idolatry. Cries of triumph from the Christians interrupted the proceedings; the panic-stricken Pagans, abandoning

Rescript of Theodosius.

* If the oration of Libanius, exhorting the Emperor to revenge the death of Julian, was really presented to Theodosius, it betrays something of the same ignorance. He seems to think his arguments not unlikely to meet with success; at all events, he appears not to have the least notion that Theodosius would not respect the memory of the apostate.

BOOK III.

their temple and their god, silently dispersed; they sought out the most secret places of refuge; they fled their country. Two of the celebrated pontiffs, one of Amoun, one of "the Ape," retired to Constantinople, where the one, Ammonius, taught in a school, and continued to deplore the fall of Paganism; Helladius, the other, was known to boast the part he had taken in the sedition of Alexandria, in which, with his own hand, he had slain nine Christians.*

The imperial rescript at once went beyond and fell short of the fears of the Pagans. It disdained to exact vengeance for the blood of the Christian martyrs, who had been so happy as to lay down their lives for their Redeemer; but it commanded the destruction of the idolatrous temples; it confiscated all the ornaments, and ordered the statues to be melted or broken up for the benefit of the poor.

The temple assailed.

Theophilus hastened in his triumphant zeal to execute the ordinance of the Emperor. Marching, with the præfect at the head of the military, they ascended the steps to the temple of Serapis. They surveyed the vacant chambers of the priests and the ascetics; they paused to pillage the library †; they entered the deserted sanctuary; they stood in the presence of the god. The sight of this co-

* Socrat. Eccl. Hist. v. 16. Helladius is mentioned in a law of Theodosius the younger, as a celebrated grammarian elevated to certain honours. This law is, however, dated 425; at least five and thirty years after this transaction.

† Nos vidimus armaria librorum; quibus direptis, exinanita ea a nostris hominibus, nostris temporibus memorant. Oros. vi. 15.

The statue.

lossal image, for centuries an object of worship, struck awe to the hearts of the Christians themselves. They stood silent, inactive, trembling. The archbishop alone maintained his courage: he commanded a soldier to proceed to the assault. The soldier struck the statue with his hatchet on the knee. The blow echoed through the breathless hall, but no sound or sign of Divine vengeance ensued; the roof of the Temple fell not to crush the sacrilegious assailant, nor did the pavement heave and quake beneath his feet. The emboldened soldier climbed up to the head and struck it off; it rolled upon the ground. Serapis gave no sign of life, but a large colony of rats, disturbed in their peaceful abode, ran about on all sides. The passions of the multitude are always in extremes. From breathless awe they passed at once to ungovernable mirth. The work of destruction went on amid peals of laughter, coarse jests, and shouts of acclamation; and as the fragments of the huge body of Serapis were dragged through the streets, the Pagans, with that revulsion of feeling common to the superstitious populace, joined in the insult and mockery against their unresisting and self-abandoned god.*

* They were said to have discovered several of the tricks by which the priests of Serapis imposed on the credulity of their worshippers. An aperture of the wall was so contrived, that the light of the sun, at a particular time, fell on the face of Serapis. The sun was then thought to visit Serapis; and at the moment of their meeting, the flashing light threw a smile on the lips of the Deity. There is another story of a magnet on the roof, which, as in the fable about Mahomet's coffin, raised either a small statue of the Deity, or the sun in a car with four horses, to the roof, and there

BOOK III.

The solid walls and deep foundations of the Temple offered more unsurmountable resistance to the baffled zeal of the Christians; the work of demolition proceeded but slowly with the massive architecture*; and some time after a church was erected in the precincts, to look down upon the ruins of idolatry, which still frowned in desolate grandeur upon their conquerors.†

Yet the Christians, even after their complete triumph, were not without some lingering terrors; the Pagans not without hopes that a fearful vengeance would be exacted from the land for this sacrilegious extirpation of their ancient deities. Serapis was either the Nile, or the deity who presided over the periodical inundations of the river. The Nilometer, which measured the rise of the waters, was kept in the Temple. Would the indignant river refuse its fertilising moisture; keep sullenly within its banks, and leave the ungrateful land blasted with perpetual drought and barrenness? As the time of the inundation approached, all Egypt was in a state of trembling suspense. Long beyond the accustomed day the waters remained at their usual level; there was no sign of overflowing. The people began to murmur; the murmurs swelled into indignant remonstrances;

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held it suspended. A Christian withdrew the magnet, and the car fell, and was dashed to pieces on the pavement.

* Compare Eunap. Vit. Ædesii, p. 44. edit. Boissonade.

† The Christians rejoiced in discovering the cross in various parts of the building; they were inclined to suppose it miraculous or prophetic of their triumph. But, in fact, the crux ansata is a common hieroglyphic, a symbol of life.

the usual rites and sacrifices were demanded from the reluctant præfect, who despatched a hasty messenger to the Emperor for instructions. There was every appearance of a general insurrection; the Pagans triumphed in their turn; but before the answer of the Emperor arrived, which replied, in uncompromising faith, "that if the inundation of the river could only be obtained by magic and impious rites, let it remain dry; the fertility of Egypt must not be purchased by an act of infidelity to God.*" Suddenly, the waters began to swell, an inundation more full and extensive than usual spread over the land, and the versatile Pagans had now no course but to join again with the Christains in mockeries against the impotence of their gods.

But Christianity was not content with the demolition of the Serapion; its predominance throughout Egypt may be estimated by the bitter complaint of the Pagan writer: "Whoever wore a black dress (the monks are designated by this description) was invested in tyrannical power; philosophy and piety to the gods were compelled to retire into secret places, and to dwell in contented poverty and dignified meanness of appearance. The temples were turned into tombs for the adoration of the bones of the basest and most depraved of men, who had suffered the penalty of the law,

* Improbable as it may seem, that such an answer should be given by a statesman like Theodosius, yet it is strongly characteristic of the times. The Emperor neither denies the power of the malignant dæmons worshipped by the idolaters, nor the efficacy of enchantments, to obtain their favour, and to force from them the retarded overflow of the river.

BOOK III.

whom they made their gods."* Such was the light in which the martyr-worship of the Christians appeared to the Pagans.

The demolition of the Serapion was a penalty inflicted on the Pagans of Alexandria for their sedition and sanguinary violence; but the example was too encouraging, the hope of impunity under the present government too confident, not to spread through other cities of Egypt. To Canopus, where the principle of humidity was worshipped in the form of a vase, with a human head, Theophilus, who considered Canopus within his diocese, marched at the head of his triumphant party, demolished the temples, abolished the rites, which were distinguished for their dissolute licence, and established monasteries in the place. Canopus, from a city of revel and debauchery, became a city of monks.†

The persecution extended throughout Egypt; but the vast buildings which even now subsist, the successive works of the Pharaohs, the Ptolemies, and the Roman Emperors, having triumphed alike over time, Christianity, and Mahommedanism, show either some reverent reluctance to deprive the country of its most magnificent ornaments, or the inefficiency of the instruments which they employed in the work of devastation. For once it was less easy for men to destroy than to preserve; the power of

* Eunap. Vit. Ædesii, loc. cit.

† The Christians laughed at Canopus being called "the conqueror of the gods." The origin of this name was, that the principle of fire, the god of the Chaldeans, had been extinguished by the water within the statue of Canopus, the principle of humidity.

demolition was rebuked before the strength and solidity of these erections of primeval art.

The war, as we have seen, raged with the same partial and imperfect success in Syria; with less, probably, in Asia Minor; least of all in Greece. The demolition was no where general or systematic. Wherever monastic Christianity was completely predominant, there emulous zeal excited the laity to these aggressions on Paganism. But in Greece the noblest buildings of antiquity, at Olympia, Eleusis, Athens*, show in their decay the slower process of neglect and time, of accident and the gradual encroachment of later barbarism, rather than the iconoclastic destructiveness of early religious zeal.†

In the West, the task of St. Martin of Tours, the great extirpator of idolatry in Gaul, was comparatively easy, and his achievements by no means so much to be lamented, as those of the destroyers of the purer models of architecture in the East. The life of this saint, of which the comparatively polished and classical style singularly contrasts with the strange and legendary incidents which it relates, describes St. Martin as making regular campaigns into all the region, destroying, wherever he could, the shrines and temples of the Heathen, and replacing them by churches and monasteries.

* The Parthenon, it is well known, was entire, till towards the close of the sixteenth century. Its roof was destroyed during the siege by the Venetians. See Spon. and Wheler's Travels.

† The council of Illiberis refused the honours of martyrdom to those who were killed while breaking idols. Can. lx.

BOOK III.

So completely was his excited imagination full of his work, that he declared that Satan often assumed the visible form of Jove, of Mercury, of Venus, or of Minerva, to divert him, no doubt, from his holy design, and to protect their trembling fanes.*

Paganism at Rome.

But the power and the majesty of Paganism were still concentered at Rome; the deities of the ancient faith found their last refuge in the capital of the empire. To the stranger, Rome still offered the appearance of a Pagan city: it contained one hundred and fifty-two temples, and one hundred and eighty smaller chapels or shrines, still sacred to their tutelary God, and used for public worship.† Christianity had neither ventured to usurp those few buildings which might be converted to her use, still less had she the power to destroy them. The religious edifices were under the protection of the præfect of the city, and the præfect was usually a Pagan; at all events, he would not permit any breach of the public peace, or violation of public property. Above all still towered the Capitol, in its unassailed and awful majesty, with its fifty temples or shrines, bearing the most sacred names in the religious and civil annals of Rome, those of Jove, of Mars, of Janus, of Romulus, of Cæsar, of Victory. Some years after the accession of

* Sulpic. Sever. Vit. B. Martini, p. 469.

† See the Descriptiones Urbis, which bear the names of Publicus Victor, and Sextus Rufus Festus. These works could not have been written before or long after the reign of Valentinian. Compare Beugnot, Histoire de la Destruction du Paganisme en Occident. M. Beugnot has made out, on more or less satisfactory evidence, a list of the deities still worshipped in Italy. t. i. l. viii. c. 9. St. Augustin, when young, was present at the rites of Cybele, about A. D. 374.

CHAP. VIII.

Theodosius to the Eastern empire, the sacrifices were still performed as national rites at the public cost; the pontiffs made their offerings in the name of the whole human race. The Pagan orator ventures to assert that the Emperor dared not to endanger the safety of the empire by their abolition.* The Emperor still bore the title and insignia of the supreme Pontiff; the consuls before they entered upon their functions, ascended the Capitol; the religious processions passed along the crowded streets; and the people thronged to the festivals and theatres, which still formed part of the Pagan worship.

Gratian, Emperor, A. D. 367. Valentinian II., A. D. 375. Theodosius, A. D. 379.

But the edifice had begun to tremble to its foundations. The Emperor had ceased to reside at Rome; his mind, as well that of Gratian, and the younger Valentinian, as of Theodosius, was free from those early inculcated and daily renewed impressions of the majesty of the ancient Paganism which still enthralled the minds of the Roman aristocracy. Of that aristocracy, the flower and the pride was Vettius Agorius Prætextatus.† In him the wisdom of Pagan philosophy blended with the serious piety of Pagan religion: he lived to witness the commencement of the last fatal change, which he had no power to avert; he died, and his death was deplored as a public calamity, in time to escape the final extinction, or rather degradation, of Paganism. But eight years before the fatal ac- A. D. 376.

* Liban. pro Templis.

† See on Prætextatus, Macrob. Saturn. i. 2. Symmachi Epistolæ, i. 40. 43. 45., ii. 7. 34. 36. 53. 59. Hieronym. Epistolæ, xxiii.

BOOK III.

cession of Gratian, and the year of his own death, he had publicly consecrated twelve statues, in the Capitol, with all becoming splendour, to the Dii curantes, the great guardian deities of Rome.* It was not only the ancient religion of Rome which still maintained some part of its dignity, all the other religions of the empire, which still publicly celebrated their rites, and retained their temples in the metropolis, concentred all their honours on Prætextatus, and took refuge, as it were, under the protection of his blameless and venerable name. His titles in an extant inscription announce him as having attained, besides the countless honours of Roman civil and religious dignity, the highest rank in the Eleusinian, Phrygian, Syrian, and Mithriac mysteries.† His wife boasted the same religious titles; she was the priestess of the same mysteries, with the addition of some peculiar to the female sex.‡ She celebrated the funeral, even the apotheA. D. 384. osis, of her noble husband with the utmost pomp: he was the last Pagan, probably, who received the honours of deification. All Rome crowded, in sorrow and profound reverence, to the ceremony. In the language of the vehement Jerom there is a singular mixture of enforced respect and of aver-

* This appears from an inscription recently discovered (A. D. 1835), and published in the Bulletino of the Archæological Society of Rome. Compare Bunsen, Roms Beschreibung, vol. iii. p. 9.

† Augur. Pontifex Vestæ, Pontifex Solis, Quindecimvir, Curialis Herculis, sacratus Libero et Eleusiniis, Hierophanta, Neocorus, Tauroboliatus, Pater Patrum. Gruter, p. 1102. No. 2.

‡ Sacratæ apud Eleusinam Deo Baccho, Cereri, et Coræ, apud Lernam, Deo Libero, et Cereri, et Coræ, sacratæ apud Æginam Deabus; Taurobolitæ, Isiacæ, Hierophantiæ Deæ Hecatæ, sacratæ Deæ Cereris. Gruter, 309.

sion; he describes (to moralise at the awful change) the former triumphant ascent of the Capitol by Prætextatus amid the acclamations of the whole city; he admits the popularity of his life, but condemns him, without remorse, to eternal misery.*

A. D. 367. Up to the accession of Gratian, the Christian Emperor had assumed, as a matter of course, the supremacy over the religion, as well as the state, of Rome. He had been formally arrayed in the robes of the sovereign Pontiff. For the first few years of his reign, Gratian maintained the inaggressive policy of his father.† But the masculine mind of Ambrose obtained, and indeed had deserved by his public services, the supremacy over the feeble youth; and his influence began to reveal itself in a succession of acts, which plainly showed that the fate of Paganism drew near. When Gratian was in Gaul, the senate of Rome remembered that he had not been officially arrayed in the dignity of the supreme Pontificate. A solemn deputation from Rome attended to perform the customary ceremonial. The idolatrous honour was disdainfully rejected. The event was heard in Rome with consternation; it was the first overt act of separation between the religious and the civil power of the

Augustus. A. D. 378.

Gratian refuses the pontificate.

A. D. 382.

* O quanta rerum mutatio! Ille quem ante paucos dies dignitatum omnium culmina præcedebant, qui quasi de subjectis hostibus triumpharet, Capitolinas ascendit arces; quem plausu quodam et tripudio populus Romanus excepit, ad cujus intentum urbs universa commota est,—nunc desolatus et nudus, * * * non in lacteo cœli palatio ut uxor mentitur infelix, sed in sordentibus tenebris continetur. Hieronym. Epist. xxiii. vol. i. p. 135.

† M. Beugnot considers that Gratian was tolerant of Paganism from his accession, A. D. 367 to 382. He was sixteen when he ascended the throne, and became the first Augustus on the death of Valens, A. D. 378.

BOOK III.

empire.* The next hostile measure was still more unexpected. Notwithstanding the manifest authority assumed by Christianity, and by one of the Christian prelates, best qualified, by his own determined character, to wield at his will the weak and irresolute Gratian; notwithstanding the long ill-suppressed murmurs, and now bold and authoritative remonstrances, against all toleration, all connivance at Heathen idolatry, it might have been thought that any other victim would have been chosen from the synod of Gods; that all other statues would have been thrown prostrate, all other worship proscribed, before that of Victory. Constantius, though he had calmly surveyed the other monuments of Roman superstition, admired their majesty, read the inscriptions over the porticos of the temples, had nevertheless given orders for the removal of this statue, and this alone,—its removal, it may be suspected not without some superstitious reverence, to the rival capital.† Victory had been restored by Julian to the Senate-house at Rome, where she had so long presided over the counsels of the conquering republic, and of the empire. She had maintained her place during the reign of Valentinian. The decree, that the statue of Victory was to be ignominiously dragged from its pedestal in the Senate-house, that the altar was to be removed,

Statue of Victory.

* Zosimus, iv. 36. The date of this transaction is conjectural. The opinion of La Bastie, Mém. des Inscrip. xv. 141., is followed.

† Constantius (the whole account of this transaction is vague and uncircumstantial), acting in the spirit of his father, who collected a great number of the best statues to adorn the new capital, perhaps intended to transplant Victory to Constantinople.

CHAP. VIII.

A. D. 382.

and the act of public worship, with which the Senate had for centuries of uninterrupted prosperity and glory commenced and hallowed its proceedings discontinued, fell, like a thunderbolt, among the partisans of the ancient worship. Surprise yielded to indignation. By the advice of Prætextatus, a solemn deputation was sent to remonstrate with the Emperor. The Christian party in the Senate were strong enough to forward, through the Bishop Damasus, a counter-petition, declaring their resolution to abstain from attendance in the Senate so long as it should be defiled by an idolatrous ceremonial. Gratian coldly dismissed the deputation, though headed by the eloquent Symmachus, as not representing the unanimous sentiments of the Senate.*

This first open aggression on the Paganism of Rome was followed by a law which confiscated at once all the property of the temples, and swept away the privileges and immunities of the priesthood. The fate of the vestal virgins excited the strongest commiseration. They now passed unhonoured through the streets. The violence done to this institution, coeval with Rome itself, was aggravated by the bitter mockery of the Christians at the importance attached to those few and rare instances of chastity by the Pagans. They scoffed

* It is very singular that, even at this very time, severe laws seem to have been necessary to punish apostates from Christianity. In 381, Theodosius deprived such persons of the right of bequeathing their property. Similar laws were passed in 383 and 391, against those qui ex Christianis Pagani facti sunt; qui ad Paganos ritus cultusque migrarunt; qui venerabili religione neglectâ ad aras et templa transierint. Cod. Theodos. xvi. 7. 1, 2. 4, 5.

BOOK III.

at the small number of the sacred virgins; at the occasional delinquencies (for it is singular that almost the last act of Pagan pontifical authority was the capital punishment of an unchaste vestal); the privilege they possessed, and sometimes claimed, of marriage, after a certain period of service, when, according to the severer Christians, such unholy desires should have been long extinct.* If the state is to reward virginity (said the vehement Ambrose), the claims of the Christians would exhaust the treasury.

By this confiscation of the sacerdotal property, which had hitherto maintained the priesthood in opulence, the temples and the sacrificial rites in splendour, the Pagan hierarchy became stipendiaries of the state, the immediate step to their total dissolution. The public funds were still charged with a certain expenditure† for the maintenance of the public ceremonies. This was not abrogated till after Theodosius had again united the whole empire under his conquering sway, and shared with Christianity the subjugated world.

In the interval, Heathenism made perhaps more than one desperate though feeble struggle for the ascendancy. Gratian was murdered in the year 383. Valentinian II. succeeded to the sole empire of the West. The celebrated Symmachus became

* Prudentius, though he wrote later, expresses this sentiment:—

Nubit anus veterana, sacro perfuncta labore,
Desertisque focis, quibus est famulata juventus,
Transfert invitas ad fulcra jugalia rugas,
Discit et in gelido nova nupta calescere lecto.

Adv. Symm. lib. ii.

† This was called the Annona.

præfect of Rome. Symmachus commanded the respect, and even deserved the common attachment, of all his countrymen; he ventured (a rare example in those days) to interfere between the tyranny of the sovereign and the menaced welfare of the people. An uncorrupt magistrate, he deprecated the increasing burdens of unnecessary taxes, which weighed down the people; he dared to suggest that the eager petitions for office should be at once rejected, and the worthiest chosen out of the unpretending multitude. Symmachus inseparably connected, in his Pagan patriotism, the ancient religion with the welfare of Rome. He mourned in bitter humiliation over the acts of Gratian; the removal of the statue of Victory; the abrogation of the immunities of the Pagan priesthood: he hoped to obtain from the justice, or perhaps the fears, of the young Valentinian, that which had been refused by Gratian. The senate met under his authority; a petition was drawn up and presented in the name of that venerable body to the Emperor. In this composition Symmachus lavished all his eloquence. His oration is written with vigour, with dignity, with elegance. It is in this respect, perhaps, superior to the reply of Saint Ambrose.* But in the feeble and apologetic tone, we perceive at once,

Apology of Symmachus.

* Heyne has expressed himself strongly on the superiority of Symmachus. Argumentorum delectu, vi, pondere, aculeis, non minùs admirabilis illa est quam prudentiâ, cautione, ac verecundiâ; quam tanto magis sentias si verbosam et inanem, interdum calumniosam et veteratoriam declamationem Ambrosii compares. Censur. ingen. et mor. Q. A. Symmachi, in Heyne Opuscul.

The relative position of the parties influenced, no doubt, the style, and will, perhaps, the judgment, of posterity on the merit of the compositions.

BOOK III.

that it is the artful defence of an almost hopeless cause; it is cautious to timidity; dexterous; elaborately conciliatory; moderate from fear of offending, rather than from tranquil dignity. Ambrose, on the other hand, writes with all the fervid and careless energy of one confident in his cause, and who knows that he is appealing to an audience already pledged by their own passions to his side; he has not to obviate objections, to reconcile difficulties, to sue or to propitiate; his contemptuous and criminating language has only to inflame zeal, to quicken resentment and scorn. He is flowing down on the full tide of human passion, and his impulse but accelerates and strengthens the rapid current.

The personification of Rome, in the address of Symmachus, is a bold stroke of artificial rhetoric, but it is artificial; and Rome pleads instead of commanding; intreats for indulgence, rather than menaces for neglect. "Most excellent Princes, Fathers of your country, respect my years, and permit me still to practise the religion of my ancestors, in which I have grown old. Grant me but the liberty of living according to my ancient usage. This religion has subdued the world to my dominion; these rites repelled Hannibal from my walls, the Gauls from the Capitol. Have I lived thus long, to be rebuked in my old age for my religion. It is too late; it would be discreditable to amend in my old age. I intreat but peace for the gods of Rome, the tutelary gods of our country." Rome condescends to that plea, which a prosperous religion neither uses nor admits, but to which a falling

faith always clings with desperate energy. "Heaven is above us all; we cannot all follow the same path; there are many ways by which we arrive at the great secret. But we presume not to contend, we are humble suppliants!" The end of the third century had witnessed the persecutions of Diocle-sian; the fourth had not elapsed when this is the language of Paganism, uttered in her strongest hold by the most earnest and eloquent of her partisans. Symmachus remonstrates against the miserable economy of saving the maintenance of the vestal virgins; the disgrace of enriching the im-perial treasury by such gains; he protests against the confiscation of all legacies bequeathed to them by the piety of individuals. "Slaves may inherit; the vestal virgins alone, and the ministers of reli-gion, are precluded from this common privilege." The orator concludes by appealing to the deified father of the Emperor, who looks down with sorrow from the starry citadel, to see that toleration vio-lated which he had maintained with willing justice.

Reply of Ambrose.

But Ambrose was at hand to confront the elo-quent Pagan, and to prohibit the fatal concession. Far different is the tone and manner of the Arch-bishop of Milan. He asserts, in plain terms, the unquestionable obligation of a Christian sovereign to permit no part of the public revenue to be de-voted to the maintenance of idolatry. Their Roman ancestors were to be treated with reverence; but in a question of religion, they were to consider God alone. He who advises such grants as those demanded by the suppliants is guilty of sacrifice.

BOOK III.

Gradually he rises to still more imperious language, and unveils all the terrors of the sacerdotal authority. "The Emperor who shall be guilty of such concessions will find that the bishops will neither endure nor connive at his sin. If he enters a church, he will find no priest, or one who will defy his authority. The church will indignantly reject the gifts of him who has shared them with Gentile temples. The altar disdains the offerings of him who has made offerings to images. It is written, 'Man cannot serve two masters.'" Ambrose, emboldened, as it were, by his success, ventures in his second letter to treat the venerable and holy traditions of Roman glory with contempt. "How long did Hannibal insult the gods of Rome? It was the goose and not the deity that saved the Capitol. Did Jupiter speak in the goose? Where were the gods in all the defeats, some of them but recent, of the Pagan emperors? Was not the altar of Victory then standing?" He insults the number, the weaknesses, the marriages of the vestal virgins. "If the same munificence were shown to Christian virgins, the beggared treasury would be exhausted by the claims. Are not the baths, the porticos, the streets, still crowded with images? Must they still keep their place in the great council of the empire? You compel to worship, if you restore the altar. And who is this deity? Victory is a gift, and not a power; she depends on the courage of the legions, not on the influence of the religion, —a mighty deity, who is bestowed by the numbers of an army, or the doubtful issue of a battle!"

CHAP. VIII.

Foiled in argument, Paganism vainly grasped at other arms, which she had as little power to wield. On the murder of Valentinian, Arbogastes the Gaul, whose authority over the troops was without competitor, hesitated to assume the purple, which had never yet been polluted by a barbarian. He placed Eugenius, a rhetorician, on the throne. The elevation of Eugenius was an act of military violence; but the Pagans of the West hailed his accession with the most eager joy and the fondest hopes. The Christian writers denounce the apostasy of Eugenius not without justice, if Eugenius ever professed Christianity.* Throughout Italy the temples were re-opened; the smoke of sacrifice ascended from all quarters; the entrails of victims were explored for the signs of victory. The frontiers were guarded by all the terrors of the old religion. The statue of Jupiter the Thunderer, sanctified by magic rites of the most awful significance, and placed on the fortifications amid the Julian Alps, looked defiance on the advance of the Christian Emperor. The images of the gods were unrolled on the banners, and Hercules was borne in triumph at the head of the army. Ambrose fled from Milan, for the soldiery boasted that they would stable their horses in the churches, and press the clergy to fill their legions.

Murder of Valentinian, A. D. 392.

Accession of Eugenius.

In Rome, Eugenius consented, without reluctance, to the restoration of the altar of Victory, but

* Compare the letter of Ambrose to Eugenius. He addresses Eugenius apparently as a Christian, but one in the hands of more powerful Pagans.

BOOK III.

he had the wisdom to foresee the danger which his cause might incur, by the resumption of the temple estates, many of which had been granted away: he yielded with undisguised unwillingness to the irresistible importunities of Arbogastes and Flavianus.

While this reaction was taking place in the West, perhaps irritated by the intelligence of this formidable conspiracy of Paganism, with the usurpation of the throne, Theodosius published in the East the last and most peremptory of those edicts which, gradually rising in the sternness of their language, proclaimed the ancient worship a treasonable and capital crime. In its minute and searching phrases it seemed eagerly to pursue Paganism to its most secret and private lurking-places. Thenceforth no man of any station, rank, or dignity, in any place in any city, was to offer an innocent victim in sacrifice; the more harmless worship of the household gods, which lingered, probably, more deeply in the hearts of the Pagans than any other part of their system, not merely by the smoke of victims, but by lamps, incense, and garlands, was equally forbidden. To sacrifice, or to consult the entrails of victims, was constituted high treason, and thereby a capital offence, although with no treasonable intention of calculating the days of the Emperor. It was a crime of sufficient magnitude, to infringe the laws of nature, to pry into the secrets of futurity, or to inquire concerning the death of any one. Whoever permitted any Heathen rite — hanging a tree with chaplets, or raised an altar of turf — forfeited

the estate on which the offence was committed. Any house profaned with the smoke of incense was confiscated to the imperial exchequer. Whoever violated this prohibition, and offered sacrifice either in a public temple, or on the estate of another, was amerced in a fine of twenty-five pounds of gold (a thousand pounds of our money); and whoever connived at the offence was liable to the same fine: the magistrate who neglected to enforce it, to a still heavier penalty.* This law, stern and intolerant as it was, spoke, no doubt, the dominant sentiment of the Christian world†; but its repetition by the successors of Theodosius, and the employment of avowed Pagans in many of the high offices of the state and army, may permit us charitably to doubt whether the exchequer was much enriched by the forfeitures, or the sword of the executioner stained with the blood of conscientious Pagans. Polytheism boasted of no martyrs, and we may still hope that if called upon to carry its own decrees into effect, its native clemency — though, unhappily, Christian bigotry had already tasted of heretical blood—would have revolted from the sanguinary deed ‡, and yet have seen the inconsistency of these acts (which it justified in theory, on the

* Cod. Theod. xvi. 10. 12.

† Gibbon has quoted from Le Clerc a fearful sentence of St. Augustine, adressed to the Donatists. "Quis nostrûm, quis vestrûm non laudat leges ab Imperatoribus datas adversus sacrificia Paganorum? Et certè longè ibi pœna severior constituta est; illius quippe impietatis capitale supplicium est." Epist. xciii. But passages amiably inconsistent with this fierce tone might be quoted on the other side. Compare Editor's note on Gibbon, v. p. 114.

‡ Quis eorum comprehensus est in sacrificio (cum his legibus ista prohiberentur) et non negavit. Augustin, in Psalm cxx., quoted by Gibbon from Lardner.

BOOK III.

authority of the Old Testament), with the vital principles of the Gospel.

The victory of Theodosius in the West dissipated at once the vain hopes of Paganism; the pageant vanished away. Rome heard of the triumph, perhaps witnessed the presence of the great conqueror, who, in the East, had already countenanced the most destructive attacks against the temples of the gods. The Christian poet describes a solemn debate of the Senate on the claims of Jupiter and of Christ to the adoration of the Roman people. According to his account, Jupiter was outvoted by a large number of suffrages; the decision was followed by a general desertion of their ancestral deities by the obsequious minority; the old hereditary names, the Annii and the Probi, the Anicii and Olybii, the Paulini and Bassi, the popular Gracchi, six hundred families, at once passed over to the Christian cause.* The Pagan historian to a certain degree confirms the fact of the deliberate discussion, but differs as to the result. The senate, he states, firmly, but respectfully, adhered to their ancient deities.† But the last argument of the Pagan advocates was fatal to their cause. Theodosius refused any longer to assign funds from the public revenue to maintain the charge of the idolatrous worship. The senate remonstrated, that if

* Sexcentas numerare domos de sanguine prisco
Nobilium licet, ad Christi signacula versas,
Turpis ab idolii vasto emersisse profundo.
Prud. ad Symmach.

Prudentius has probably amplified some considerable desertion of the wavering and dubious believers.

† Zosim. Hist. iv. 59.

they ceased to be supported at the national cost, they would cease to be national rites. This argument was more likely to confirm than to shake the determination of the Christian Emperor. From this time the temples were deserted; the priests and priestesses, deprived of their maintenance, were scattered abroad. The public temples still stood, nor was it forbidden to worship within them, without sacrifice; the private, and family, or Gentile deities, still preserved their influence. Theodosius died the year after the defeat of Eugenius.

We pursue to its close the history of Western Paganism, which was buried at last in the ruins of the empire. Gratian had dissevered the supremacy of the national religion from the imperial dignity; he had confiscated the property of the temples; Theodosius had refused to defray the expense of public sacrifices from the public funds. Still, however, the outward form of Paganism remained. Some priesthoods were still handed down in regular descent; the rites of various deities, even of Mithra and Cybele, were celebrated without sacrifice, or with sacrifice, furtively performed; the corporation of the aruspices was not abolished. There still likewise remained a special provision for certain festivals and public amusements.* The expense of the sacred banquets and of the games was defrayed by the state: an early law of Honorius respected the common enjoyments of the people.† A. D. 395.

* It was called the vectigal templorum.

† Communis populi lætitia.

BOOK III.

The poem of Prudentius * acknowledges that the enactments of Theodosius had been far from altogether successful †; his bold assertion of the universal adoption of Christianity by the whole senate is in some degree contradicted by his admission that the old pestilence of idolatry had again broken out in Rome. ‡ It implies that the restoration of the statue of Victory had again been urged, and by the indefatigable Symmachus, on the sons of Theodosius. § The poem was written after the battle of Pollentia, as it triumphantly appeals to the glories of that day, against the argument that Rome was indebted for the victories of former times to her ancient gods. It closes with an earnest admonition to the son of Theodosius to fulfil the task which was designedly left him by the piety of his father ||, to suppress at once the vestal virgins, and,

A. D. 403.

* The poem of Prudentius is by no means a recapitulation of the arguments of St. Ambrose; it is original, and in some parts very vigorous.

† Inclitus ergo parens patriæ, moderator et orbis,
Nil egit prohibendo, vagas ne pristinus error
Crederet esse Deûm nigrante sub aere formas.

‡ Sed quoniam renovata lues turbare salutem
Tentat Romulidum.

§ Armorum dominos, vernantes flore juventæ,
Inter castra patris genitos, sub imagine avitâ
Eductos, exempla domi congesta tenentes,
Orator catus instigat. . . .
Si vobis vel parta, viri, victoria cordi est,
Vel parienda dehinc, templum Dea virgo sacratum
Obtineat, vobis regnantibus.

The orator catus, is Symmachus; the parta victoria, that of Pollentia; the Dea virgo, Victory.

|| Quam tibi supplendam Deus, et genitoris amica
Servavit pietas: solus ne præmia tantæ
Virtutis caperet "partem, tibi, nate reservo,"
Dixit, et integrum decus intactumque reliquit. Sub fin.

CHAP. VIII.

above all, the gladiatorial shows, which they were accustomed to countenance by their presence.

Law of Honorius.

In the year 408 came forth the edict which aimed at the direct and complete abolition of Paganism throughout the Western empire. The whole of this reserved provision for festivals was swept away; it was devoted to the more useful purpose, the pay of the loyal soldiery.* The same edict proceeded to actual violence, to invade and take possession of the sanctuaries of religion. All images were to be thrown down; the edifices, now useless and deserted, to be occupied by the imperial officers, and appropriated to useful purposes.† The government, wavering between demolition and desecration, devised this plan for the preservation of these great ornaments of the cities, which thus, taken under the protection of the magistracy as public property, were secured from the destructive zeal of the more fanatical Christians. All sacrilegious rites, festivals, and ceremonies were prohibited. The bishops of the towns were invested with power to suppress these forbidden usages, and the civil authorities, as though the government mistrusted their zeal, were bound, under a heavy penalty, to obey the summons, and to assist the prelates in the extirpation of idolatry. Another edict excluded all enemies of the Christian faith from the great public offices in the state and in the

* Expensis devotissimorum militum profutura.

† Augustine (though not entirely consistent) disapproved of the forcible demolition of the temples. "Let us first extirpate the idolatry of the hearts of the Heathen, and they will either themselves invite us, or anticipate us in the execution of this good work." Tom. v. p. 62.

BOOK III.

army, and this, if fully carried into effect, would have transferred the whole power throughout the empire into the hands of the Christians. But the times were not yet ripe for this measure. Generides, a Pagan, in a high command in the army, threw up his commission. The edict was repealed.*

* Prudentius ventures to admire the tolerant impartiality of Theodosius, in admitting both parties alike to civil and military honours. He urges this argumentum ad hominem against Symmachus: —

Denique pro meritis terrestribus æqua rependens
Munera, sacricolis summos impertit honores
Dux bonus, et certare sinit cum laude suorum.
Nec pago implicitos per debita culmina mundi
Ire vetat.
Ipse magistratum tibi consulis, ipse tribunal
Contulit.

In the East, the Pagan Themistius had been appointed præfect of Constantinople by Theodosius. It is curious to read his flatteries of the orthodox Christian Emperor; he praises his love of philosophy in the most fervent language.

The most remarkable instance of this inconsistency, at a much later period, occurs in the person of Merobaudes, a general and a poet, who flourished in the first half of the fifth century. A statue in honour of Merobaudes was placed in the Forum of Trajan, of which the inscription is still extant. Fragments of his poems have been discovered by the industry and sagacity of Niebuhr. In one passage, Merobaudes, in the genuine Heathen spirit, attributes the ruin of the empire to the abolition of Paganism, and almost renews the old accusation of Atheism against Christianity. He impersonates some deity, probably Discord, who summons Bellona to take arms for the destruction of Rome; and, in a strain of fierce irony, recommends to her, among other fatal measures, to extirpate the gods of Rome:

Roma, ipsique tremant furialia murmura reges.
Jam superos terris, atque hospita numina pelle:
Romanos populare Deos, et nullus in aris
Vestæ exoratæ, fotus strue, palleat ignis.
His instructa dolis palatia celsa subibo,
Majorum mores, et pectora prisca fugabo
Funditus, atque simul, nullo discrimine rerum,
Spernantur fortes, nec sit reverentia justis.
Attica neglecto pereat facundia Phœbo,
Indignis contingat honos, et pondera rerum.
Non virtus sed casus agat, tristisque cupido;
Pectoribus sævi demens furor æstuet ævi;
Omniaque hæc sine mente Jovis, sine numine summo.

Merobaudes in Niebuhr's edit. of the Byzantines.

CHAP. VIII.

Rome once more beheld the shadow of a Pagan Emperor, Attalus, while the Christian Emperor maintained his court at Ravenna; and both stood trembling before the victorious Alaric. When that triumphant Goth formed the siege of Rome, Paganism, as if grateful for the fidelity of the imperial city, made one last desperate effort to avert the common ruin. Pagan magic was the last refuge of conscious weakness. The Etrurian soothsayers were called forth from their obscurity, with the concurrence of the whole city (the Pope himself is said to have assented to the idolatrous ceremony), to blast the barbaric invader with the lightnings of Jupiter. The Christian historian saves the credit of his party, by asserting that they kept away from the profane rite.* But it may be doubted, after all, whether the ceremony really took place; both parties had more confidence in the power of a large sum of money, offered to arrest the career of the triumphant barbarian.

Capture of Rome by Alaric.

The impartial fury of Alaric fell alike on church and temple, on Christian and Pagan. But the capture of Rome consummated the ruin of Paganism. The temples, indeed, were for the most part left standing, but their worshippers had fled. The Roman aristocracy, in whom alone Paganism still retained its most powerful adherents, abandoned the city, and, scattered in the provinces of the empire, were absorbed in the rapidly Christianising population. The deserted buildings had now neither public authority

* Zosimus, v. Sozomen, ix. 6.

BOOK III.

nor private zeal and munificence to maintain them against the encroachments of time or accident, to support the tottering roof, or repair the broken column. There was neither public fund, nor private contribution, for their preservation, till at length the Christians, in many instances, took possession of the abandoned edifice, converted it to their own use, and hallowed it by a new consecration.* Thus, in many places, though marred and disfigured, the monuments of architecture survived, with no great violation of the ground plan, distribution, or general proportions.†

Paganism was, in fact, left to die out by gradual dissolution.‡ The worship of the Heathen deities lingered in many temples, till it was superseded by the new form of Christianity, which, at least in its outward appearance, approximated to Polytheism: the Virgin gradually supplanted many of the local deities. In Sicily, which long remained obstinately wedded to the ancient faith, eight celebrated temples were dedicated to the Mother of God.§ It

* There are many churches in Rome, which, like the Pantheon, are ancient temples; thirty-nine built on the foundations of temples. Four retain Pagan names. S. Maria sopra Minerva, S. Maria Aventina, S. Lorenzo in Matuta, S. Stefano in Cacco. At Sienna, the temple of Quirinus became the church of S. Quirino. Beugnot, ii. p. 266. See in Bingham, book viii. s. 4., references to several churches in the East, converted into temples. But this passage must be read with caution.

† In some cases, by a more destructive appropriation, they converted the materials to their own use, and worked them up into their own barbarous churches.

‡ The fifth council of Carthage (A.D. 398.), can. xv., petitioned the most glorious Emperors to destroy the remains of idolatry, not merely "in simulacris," but in other places, groves, and trees.

§ Beugnot, ii. 271.; from Aprile, Chronologia Universale de Sicilia.

was not till the seventh century, that the Pantheon was dedicated by Pope Boniface IV. to the Holy Virgin. Of the public festivals, the last which clung with tenacious grasp to the habits of the Roman people, was the Lupercalia. It was suppressed towards the close of the fifth century by Pope Gelasius. The rural districts were not completely Christianised until the general introduction of monasticism. Heathenism was still prevalent in many parts of Italy, especially in the neighbourhood of Turin, in the middle of the fifth century.* It was the missionary from the convent who wandered through the villages, or who, from his monastery, regularly discharged the duties of a village pastor. St. Benedict of Nursia destroyed the worship of Apollo on Mount Casino.

A. D. 493.

Every where the superstition survived the religion, and that which was unlawful under Paganism, continued to be unlawfully practised under Christianity. The insatiable propensity of men to enquire into futurity, and to deal with secret and invisible agencies, which reason condemns, and often, while it condemns, consults, retained its old formularies, some religious, some pretending to be magical or theurgic. Divination and witchcraft have never been extinct in Italy, or, perhaps, in any part of Europe. The descendants of Canidia or Erictho, the seer and the magician, have still prac-

* See the sermons of Maximus, bishop of Turin, quoted in Beugnot, ii. 253.

BOOK III.

tised their arts, to which the ignorant, including at times all mankind, have listened with unabated credulity.

We must resume our consideration of Paganising Christianity, as the parent of Christian art and poetry, and, in fact, the ruler of the human mind for many ages.

CHAPTER IX.

THEODOSIUS. TRIUMPH OF TRINITARIANISM. THE GREAT PRELATES OF THE EAST.

Orthodoxy of Theodosius.

But the unity, no less than the triumph, of Christianity occupied the vigorous mind of Theodosius. He had been anticipated in this design in the West by his feeble predecessors and colleagues, Gratian and Valentinian the younger. The laws began to speak the language of the exclusive establishment of Christianity, and of Christianity under one rigorous and unaccommodating creed and discipline. Almost the first act of Theodosius was the edict for the universal acceptance of the Catholic faith.* It appeared under the name, and with the conjoint authority of the three Emperors, Gratian, Valentinian II., and Theodosius. It was addressed to the inhabitants of Constantinople. "We, the three Emperors, *will* that all our subjects follow the religion taught by St. Peter to the Romans, professed by those saintly prelates, Damasus Pontiff of Rome, and Peter Bishop of Alexandria, that we believe the one divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of majesty coequal, in the Holy Trinity. We *will* that those who embrace this creed be called Catholic Christians; we brand all the senseless followers of other religions by the

Laws against heretics. A. D. 380.

* Codex Theodos. xvi. 1, 2.

BOOK III.

infamous name of heretics, and forbid their conventicles to assume the name of churches; we reserve their punishment to the vengeance of heaven, and to such measures as divine inspiration shall dictate to us." * Thus the religion of the whole Roman world was enacted by two feeble boys, and a rude Spanish soldier.† The next year witnessed the condemnation of all heretics, particularly the Photinians, Arians, and Eunomians, and the expulsion of the Arians from the churches of all the cities in the East‡, and their surrender to the only *lawful* form of Christianity. On the assembling of the council of Chalcedon, two severe laws were issued against Apostates and Manicheans, prohibiting them from making wills. During its sitting, the Emperor promulgated an edict, prohibiting the Arians from building churches either in the cities or in the country, under pain of the confiscation of the funds devoted to the purpose.§

All the more powerful ecclesiastical writers favourable to Trinitarianism.

The circumstances of the times happily coincided with the design of Theodosius to concentre the whole Christian world into one vigorous and consistent system. The more legitimate influence of argument and intellectual and religious supe-

* Post etiam motus nostri, quem ex cœlesti arbitrio sumpserimus, ultione plectendos. Godefroy supposes these words not to mean "cœleste oraculum," but, "Dei arbitrium, regulam et formulam juris divini."

† Baronius, and even Godefroy, call this law a golden, pious, and wholesome statute. Happily it was on the right side.

‡ On the accession of Theodosius, according to Sozomen, the Arians possessed all the churches of the East, except Jerusalem. H. E. vii. 2.

§ Sozomen mentions these severe laws, but asserts that they were enacted merely in terrorem, and with no design of carrying them into execution. H. E. vii. 12.

riority concurred with the stern mandates of the civil power. All the great and commanding minds of the age were on the same side, as to the momentous and strongly agitated questions of the faith. The productive energies of Arianism seemed, as it were, exhausted; its great defenders had passed away, and left, apparently, no heirs to their virtues or abilities. It was distracted with schisms, and had to bear the unpopularity of the sects, which seemed to have sprung from it in the natural course, the Eunomians, Macedonians, and a still multiplying progeny of heresies. Every where the Trinitarian prelates rose to ascendancy, not merely from the support of the government, but from their pre-eminent character or intellectual powers. Each province seemed to have produced some individual adapted to the particular period and circumstances of the time, who devoted himself to the establishment of the Athanasian opinions. The intractable Egypt, more particularly turbulent Alexandria, was ruled by the strong arm of the bold and unprincipled Theophilus. The dreamy mysticism of Syria found a congenial representative in Ephrem. A more intellectual, yet still somewhat imaginative, Orientalism animates the writings of St. Basil; in a less degree, those of Gregory of Nazianzum; still less, those of Gregory of Nyssa. The more powerful and Grecian eloquence of Chrysostom swayed the popular mind in Constantinople. Jerom, a link, as it were, between the East and the West, transplanted the monastic spirit and opinions of Syria into Rome; and brought into the East much of

BOOK III.

the severer thought, and more prosaic reasoning, of the Latin world. In Gaul, where Hilary of Poitiers had long maintained the cause of Trinitarianism, on the borders of civilisation, St. Martin of Tours acted the part of a bold and enterprising missionary; while in Milan, the court capital of the West, the strong practical character of Ambrose, his sternly conscientious moral energy, though hardening at times into rigid intolerance, with the masculine strength of his style, confirmed the Latin church in that creed, to which Rome had adhered with almost unshaken fidelity. If not the greatest, the most permanently influential of all, Augustine, united the intense passion of the African mind with the most comprehensive and systematic views, and intrepid dogmatism on the darkest subjects. United in one common cause, acting in their several quarters according to their peculiar temperaments and characters, these strong-minded and influential ecclesiastics almost compelled the world into a temporary peace, till first Pelagianism, and afterwards Nestorianism, unsettled again the restless elements; the controversies, first concerning grace, free-will, and predestination, then on the incarnation and two natures of Christ, succeeded to the silenced and exhausted feud concerning the trinity of persons in the Godhead.

Theophilus of Alexandria, bishop, from 385 to 412.

Theophilus of Alexandria* performed his part in the complete subjection of the world, by his energy as a ruler, not by the slower and more

* I have not placed these writers in their strict chronological order, but according to the countries in which they lived.

legitimate influence of moral persuasion through his preaching or his writings.* He suppressed Arianism by the same violent and coercive means with which he extirpated Paganism. The tone of this prelate's epistles is invariably harsh and criminatory. He appears in the best light as opposing the vulgar anthropomorphism of the monks in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and insisting on the pure spiritual nature of the Deity. Yet he condescended to appease these turbulent adversaries by an unmanly artifice. He consented to condemn the doctrines of Origen, who, having reposed quietly in his tomb for many years, in general respect, if not in the odour of sanctity, was exhumed, as it were, by the zeal of later times, as a dangerous heresiarch. The Oriental doctrines with which Origen had impregnated his system were unpopular, and perhaps not clearly understood.† The notion that the reign of Christ was finite was rather an inference from his writings, than a tenet of Origen. For if all bodies were to be finally annihilated (according to his anti-materialist system), the humanity of Christ, and consequently his personal reign, must cease. The possibility that the devil might, after long purification, be saved, and the corruptibility of the body after the resurrection, grew out of the same Oriental cast of opinions. But the perfectly pure and immaterial nature of the Deity was the tenet of Origen which was the most odious to the

* The Trinitarian doctrines had been maintained in Alexandria by the virtues and abilities of Didymus the Blind.

† Socrates, vi. 10. Sozomen, viii. 13.

BOOK III.

monks; and Theophilus, by anathematising Origenism in the mass, while he himself held certainly the sublimest, but to his adversaries most objectionable part of the system, adopted a low and undignified deception. The persecution of Isidore, and the heads of the monasteries who befriended his cause (the tall brethren, as they were called), from personal motives of animosity, display the Alexandrian prelate in his ordinary character. We shall again encounter Theophilus in the lamentable intrigues against the advancement and influence of Chrysostom.

S. Ephrem, the Syrian, died 379.

The character of Ephrem *, the Syrian, was the exact counterpart to that of the busy and worldly Theophilus. A native of Nisibis, or rather of its neighbourhood, Ephrem passed the greater part of his life at Edessa, and in the monastic establishments which began to abound in Mesopotamia and Syria, as in Egypt. His genius was that of the people in whose language he wrote his numerous compositions in prose and verse.† In Ephrem something of the poetic mysticism of the Gnostic was allied with the most rigid orthodoxy of doctrine. But with his imaginative turn were mingled a depth and intensity of feeling, which gave him his peculiar influence over the kindred minds of his countrymen. Tears were as natural to him as perspiration; day and night, in his devout seclusion, he wept

* See the Life of Ephrem prefixed to his works; and in Tillemont.

† According to Theodoret, he was unacquainted with Greek. *Παιδείας γὰρ οὐ γεγευμένος ἑλληνικῆς, τούς τε πολυσχιδεῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων διήλεγξε πλάνους, καὶ πάσης αἱρετικῆς κακοτεχνίας ἐγύμνωσε τὴν ἀσθένειαν.* The refutation of Greek heresy in Syriac must have been curious.

for the sins of mankind and for his own; his very writings, it was said, weep; there is a deep and latent sorrow even in his panegyrics or festival homilies.*

Ephrem was a poet, and his hymns, poured forth in the prodigality of his zeal, succeeded at length in entirely disenchanting the popular ear from the heretical strains of Bardesanes, and his son Harmonius, which lingered after the general decay of Gnosticism.† The hymns of Ephrem were sung on the festivals of the martyrs. His psalms, the constant occupation which he enjoins upon his monkish companions, were always of a sorrowful and contrite tone. Laughter was the source and the indication of all wickedness, sorrow of all virtue. During the melancholy psalm, God was present with his angels, all more joyous strains belonged to heathenism and idolatry.

The monasticism as well as the Trinitarianism of Syria, received a strong impulse from Ephrem, and in Syria monasticism began to run into its utmost extravagance. There was one class of ascetics who, at certain periods, forsook their cities, and retired to the mountains to browse on the herbage which they found, as their only food. The writings of Ephrem were the occupation and delight of all these gentle and irreproachable fanatics; and, as Ephrem was rigidly Trinitarian, he contributed to fix the doctrinal language of the various cœnobitic

* See the two treatises in his works, vol. i. 104—107. Non esse ridendum sed lugendum potius atque plorandum; and, Quod ludicris rebus abstinendum sit Christianis.

† Theodoret, iv. 29.

BOOK III.

institutions and solitary hermitages. In fact, the quiescent intellect probably rejoiced in being relieved from these severe and ungrateful enquiries: and full freedom being left to the imagination, and ample scope to the language, in the vague and fervent expressions of divine love, the Syrian mind felt not the restriction of the rigorous creed, and passively surrendered itself to ecclesiastical authority. Absorbed in its painful and melancholy struggles with the internal passions and appetites, it desired not to provoke, but rather to repress, the dangerous activity of the reason. The orthodoxy of Ephrem himself savours perhaps of timidity and the disinclination to agitate such awful and appalling questions. He would elude and escape them, and abandon himself altogether to the more edifying emotions which it is the chief object of his writings to excite and maintain. The dreamer must awake in order to reason, and he prefers the passive tranquillity of the half-waking state.

Greece, properly so called, contributed none of the more distinguished names in Eastern Christianity. Even the Grecian part of Asia Minor was by no means fertile in names which survive in the annals of the Church. In Athens philosophy still lingered, and struggled to maintain its predominance. Many of the more eminent ecclesiastics had visited its schools in their youth, to obtain those lessons of rhetoric and profane knowledge which they were hereafter to dedicate to their own sacred uses. But they were foreigners, and, in the old language of Greece, would have been called barbarians.

The rude and uncivilised Cappadocia gave birth to Basil and the two Gregories. The whole of the less dreamy, and still active and commercial, part of Asia was influenced by Basil, on whose character and writings his own age lavished the most unbounded praise. The name of Basil is constantly united with those of the two Gregories. One, Gregory of Nyssa, was his brother; the other, named from his native town of Nazianzum, of which his father was bishop, was the intimate friend of his boyhood and of his later years. The language, the eloquence, the opinions of these writers retain, in different degrees, some tinge of Asiatic colouring. Far more intelligible and practical than the mystic strains and passionate homilies of Ephrem, they delight in agitating, though in a more modest spirit, the questions which had inflamed the imagination of the Gnostics. But with them, likewise, enquiry proceeds with cautious and reverent steps. On these subjects they are rigorously orthodox, and assert the exclusive doctrines of Athanasius with the most distinct and uncompromising energy. Basil maintained the cause of Trinitarianism with unshaken fidelity during its days of depression and adversity. His friend Gregory of Nazianzum lived to witness and bear a great part in its triumph. Both Basil and Gregory were ardent admirers, and in themselves transcendant models of the more monastic Christianity. The influence of Basil crowded that part of Asia with cœnobitic institutions: but in his monasteries labour and useful

BOOK III.

industry prevailed to a greater extent than in the Syrian deserts.

S. Basil.

Basil was a native of the Cappadocian Cæsarea.* He was an hereditary Christian. His grandfather had retired during the Dioclesian persecution to a mountain forest in Pontus. His father was a man of estimation as a lawyer, possessed considerable property, and was remarkable for his personal beauty. His mother, in person and character, was worthy of her husband. The son of such parents received the best education which could be bestowed on a Christian youth. Having exhausted the instruction to be obtained in his native city of Cæsarea, he went to Constantinople, where he is reputed to have studied the art of rhetoric under the celebrated Libanius. But Athens was still the centre of liberal education, and, with other promising youths from the Eastern provinces, Basil and his friend Gregory resided for some time in that city. But with all his taste for letters and eloquence (and Basil always spoke even of profane learning with generous respect, far different from the tone of contempt and animosity expressed by some writers), Christianity was too deeply rooted in his heart to be endangered either by the studies or the society of Athens. On his return to Cæsarea, he embraced the ascetic faith of the times with more than ordinary fervour. He abandoned his property, he practised such severe austerities as to injure his health, and to reduce his bodily form to the extreme

* Life of Basil, prefixed to his works, and Tillemont, Vie de S. Basile.

CHAP. IX.

of meagreness and weakness. He was "without wife, without property, without flesh, almost without blood." He fled into the desert; his fame collected, as it were, a city around him; he built a monastery, and monasteries sprang up on every side. Yet the opinions of Basil concerning the monastic life were far more moderate and practical than the wilder and more dreamy asceticism which prevailed in Egypt and in Syria. He admired and persuaded his followers to cœnobitic, not to eremitical, life. It was the life of the industrious religious community, not of the indolent and solitary anchorite, which to Basil was the perfection of Christianity. All ties of kindred were indeed to give place to that of spiritual association. He that loves a brother in blood more than a brother in the religious community is still a slave to his carnal nature.* The indiscriminate charity of these institutions, was to receive orphans of all classes for education and maintenance, but other children only with the consent, or at the request of parents, certified before witnesses; and vows of virginity were by no means to be enforced upon these youthful pupils.† Slaves who fled to the monasteries were to be admonished, and sent back to their owners. There is one reservation, that slaves were not bound to obey their master, if he should order what is contrary to the laws of God.‡ Industry was to be the animating principle of these settlements. Prayer and psalmody were to have their appointed

* Basil. Opera, ii. 325. Sermo Asceticus.

† Basil. Opera, ii. 355.

‡ Basil. Opera, ii. 357.

BOOK III.

hours; but by no means to intrude upon those devoted to useful labour. These labours were strictly defined, such as were of real use to the community, not those which might contribute to vice or luxury. Agriculture was especially recommended. The life was in no respect to be absorbed in a perpetual mystic communion with the Deity.

A. D. 366. Basil lived in his monastic retirement during a See ch. viii. p. 125. great part of the triumphant period of Arianism in the East; but during the reign of Valens, he was recalled to Cæsarea, to be the champion of A. D. 370. Trinitarianism against the Emperor and his Arian partisans. The firmness of Basil, as we have seen, commanded the respect even of his adversaries. In the midst of the raging controversy, he was raised to the archepiscopal throne of Cæsarea. He governed the see with activity and diligence: not only the influence of his writings, but his actual authority (his pious ambition of usefulness induced him perhaps to overstep the limits of his diocese) extended beyond Cappadocia, into Armenia and parts of Asia Minor. He was the firm supporter of the Nicene Trinitarianism, but did not live to A. D. 379. behold its final triumph. His decease followed immediately upon the defeat and death of Valens.

The style of Basil did no discredit to his Athenian education; in purity and perspicuity he surpasses most of the Heathen, as well as the Christian writers of his age.

Gregory of Nazianzum. Gregory of Nazianzum, as he shared the friendship, so he has constantly participated in the fame of Basil. He was born in a village, Arianza, within the district of Nazianzum, his father was bishop

of that city.* With Basil he passed a part of his youth at Athens, and predicted, according to his own account, the apostasy of Julian, from the observation of his character, and even of his person. Gregory is his own biographer; one or rather two poems, the first consisting of above two thousand iambics, the second of hexameters, describe the whole course of his early life. But Grecian poetry was not to be awakened from its long slumber by the voice of a Christian poet. It was faithful to its ancient source of inspiration. Christian thoughts and images will not blend with the language of Homer and the tragedians. Yet the autobiographical poems of Gregory illustrate a remarkable peculiarity which distinguishes modern and Christian from the older, more particularly the Grecian, poetry. In the Grecian poetry, as in Grecian life, the public absorbed the individual character. The person of the poet rarely appears, unless occasionally as the poet, as the objective author or reciter, not as the subject of the poem. The Elegiac poets of Greece, if we may judge from the few surviving fragments, and the amatory writers of Rome, speak in their proper persons, utter their individual thoughts, and embody their peculiar feelings. In the shrewd common life view of Horace, and, indeed in some of his higher lyric poetry, the poet is more prominent; and the fate

His poems

Characteristic difference between Greek and Christian poetry.

* Tillemont is grievously embarrassed by the time of Gregory's birth. The stubborn dates insist upon his having been born after his father had attained the episcopate. He is forced to acknowledge the laxity of ecclesiastical discipline on this head, at this period of the church.

BOOK III.

of Ovid, one day basking in the imperial favour, the next, for some mysterious offence, banished to the bleak shores of the Euxine, seemed to give him the privilege of dwelling upon his own sorrows; his strange fate invested his life in peculiar interest. But by the Christian scheme, the individual man has assumed a higher importance; his actions, his opinions, the emotions of his mind, as connected with his immortal state, have acquired a new and commanding interest, not only to himself but to others. The poet profoundly scrutinises, and elaborately reveals, the depths of his moral being. The psychological history of the man, in all its minute particulars, becomes the predominant matter of the poem. In this respect, these autobiographical poems of Gregory, loose as they are in numbers, and spun out with a wearisome and garrulous mediocrity; and wanting that depth and passion of religion which has made the Confessions of Augustine one of the most permanently popular of Christian writings, possess nevertheless some interest, as indicating the transition state in poetry, as well as illustrating the thought and feeling prevalent among the Christian youth of the period. The one great absorbing question was the comparative excellence of the secular and the monastic life, the state of marriage or of virginity. The enthusiasm of the East scarcely deigned to submit this point to discussion. In one of Gregory's poems, Marriage and Virginity each plead their cause; but there can be no doubt, from the first, to which will be assigned the victory. The Saviour gives

Value of Gregory's.

CHAP. IX.

to Virginity the place of honour on his right hand. Gregory had never entangled himself with marriage, that fatal tie which enthralls the soul in the bonds of matter. For him silken robes, gorgeous banquets, splendid palaces, music and perfumes, had no charm. He disregarded wealth, and feasted contentedly on bread with a little salt, and water for his only drink. The desire of supporting the declining age of his parents thwarted his holy ambition of withdrawing from all worldly intercourse: but this became a snare. He was embarrassed by refractory servants, by public and private business. The death of his brother involved him still more inextricably in affairs, arising out of his contested property. But the faithless friendship of Basil, which he deplores in the one touching passage of his whole poem *, still further endangered his peace. In the zeal of Basil to fill the bishoprics of his metropolitan diocese, calculating perhaps that Gregory, like himself, would generously sacrifice the luxury of religious quietude for the more useful duties of a difficult active position, he imposed upon his reluctant friend the charge of the newly created see of Sasima. This was a small and miserable town, at the meeting of three roads, in

Gregory, bishop of Sasima. A. D. 372.

* Gibbon's selection of this passage, and his happy illustration from Shakespeare, do great credit to his poetical taste:

Πόνοι κοίνοι λόγων
Ὁμόστεγός τε, καὶ συνέστιος βίος,
Νοῦς εἷς ἐν ἀμφοῖν * * * *
Διεσκέδασται πάντα, κρρίπται χαμαὶ,
Αὖραι φέρουσι τὰς παλαιὰς ἐλπίδας.

Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, &c. Helena, in the Midsummer Night's Dream. See Gibbon, c. xxvii. vol. v. p. 18.

BOOK III.

a country at once arid, marshy, and unwholesome, noisy and dusty from the constant passage of travellers, the disputes with extortionate custom-house officers, and all the tumult and drunkenness belonging to a town inhabited by loose and passing strangers. With Basil, Gregory had passed the tranquil days of his youth, the contemplative period of his manhood; together they had studied at Athens, together they had twice retired to monastic solitude; and this was the return for his long and tried attachment! Gregory, in the bitterness of his remonstrance, at one time assumes the language of an Indian faquir. Instead of rejoicing in the sphere opened to his activity, he boldly asserts his supreme felicity to be total inaction.* He submitted with the strongest repugnance to the office, and abandoned it, almost immediately, on the first opposition. He afterwards administered the see of Nazianzum under his father, and even after his father's decease, without assuming the episcopal title.

Gregory, bishop of Constantinople.

From A.D. 339 to 379.

But Gregory was soon compelled by his own fame for eloquence and for orthodoxy to move in a more arduous and tumultuous sphere. For forty years Arianism had been dominant in Constantinople. The Arians mocked at the small number which still lingered in the single religious assemblage of the Athanasian party.† Gregory is constrained to admit this humiliating fact, and indig-

* Ἐμοὶ δὲ μεγίστη πρᾶξίς ἐστιν ἡ ἀπραξία. Epist. xxxiii. p. 797.

† In the reign of Valentinian, they met ἐν μικρῷ οἰκίσκῳ. Socrates, iv. 1.

nantly inquires, whether the sands are more precious than the stars of heaven, or the pebbles than pearls, because they are more numerous?* But the accession of Theodosius opened a new æra to the Trinitarians. The religion of the Emperor would no longer condescend to this humble and secondary station. Gregory was invited to take charge of the small community which was still faithful to the doctrines of Athanasius. Gregory was already bowed with age and infirmity; his bald head stooped to his bosom; his countenance was worn by his austerities and his inward spiritual conflicts, when he reluctantly sacrified his peace for this great purpose.† The Catholics had no church; they met in a small house, on the site of which afterwards arose the celebrated church of St. Anastasia. The eloquence of Gregory wrought wonders in the busy and versatile capital. The Arians themselves crowded to hear him. His adversaries were reduced to violence; the Anastasia was attacked; the Arian monks, and even the virgins, mingled in the furious fray: many lives were lost, and Gregory was accused as the cause of the tumult. His innocence, and the known favour of the Emperor, secured his acquittal; his eloquence was seconded by the imperial edicts. The law had been promulgated which denounced as heretics all who rejected the Nicene Creed.

The influence of Gregory was thwarted, and his peace disturbed, by the strange intrigues of one Maximus to possess himself of the episcopal throne

* Orat. xxv. p. 431. † Tillemont, art. xlvi.

BOOK III.

of Constantinople. Maximus was called the Cynic, from his attempt to blend the rude manners, the coarse white dress, his enemies added, the vices, of that sect, with the profession of Christianity. His memory is loaded with every kind of infamy; yet by dexterous flattery and assiduous attendance on the sermons of Gregory, he had stolen into his unsuspecting confidence, and received his public commendations in a studied oration.* Constantinople and Gregory himself were suddenly amazed with the intelligence that Maximus had been consecrated the Catholic bishop of the city. This extraordinary measure had been taken by seven Alexandrians of low birth and character†, with some bishops deputed by Peter the orthodox Archbishop of Alexandria.‡ A number of mariners, probably belonging to the corn fleet, had assisted at the ceremony and raised the customary acclamations. A great tumult of all orders arose; all rushed to the church, from which Maximus and his party withdrew, and hastily completed a kind of tonsure (for the cynic prided himself on his long hair) in the private dwelling of a flute-player. Maximus seems to have been rejected with indignation by the Athanasians of Constantinople, who

* The panegyric on the philosopher Heron.

† Some of their names were whimsically connected with the Egyptian mythology, Ammon, Anubis, and Hermanubis.

‡ The interference of the Egyptians is altogether remarkable. Could there be a design to establish the primacy of Alexandria over Constantinople, and so over the East? It is observable that in his law, Theodosius names as the examples of doctrine, the Bishop of Rome in the West, of Alexandria in the East. The intrigues of Theophilus against Chrysostom rather confirm this notion of an attempt to erect an Eastern papacy.

adhered with unshaken fidelity to Gregory; he fled to the court of Theodosius, but the earliest measure adopted by the Emperor to restore strength to the orthodox party, was the rejection of the intrusive prelate.

The first act of Theodosius on his arrival at Constantinople, was to issue an edict, expelling the Arians from the churches, and summoning Demophilus, the Arian bishop, to conform to the Nicene doctrine. Demophilus refused. The Emperor commanded that those who would not unite to establish Christian peace should retire from the houses of Christian prayer. Demophilus assembled his followers, and quoting the words of the Gospel, "If you are persecuted in one city, flee unto another," retired before the irresistible authority of the Emperor. The next step was the appointment of the reluctant Gregory to the see, and his enthronisation, in the principal church of the metropolis. Environed by the armed legionaries, in military pomp, accompanied by the Emperor himself, Gregory, amazed and bewildered, and perhaps sensible of the incongruity of the scene with the true Christian character, headed the triumphal procession. All around he saw the sullen and menacing faces of the Arian multitude, and his ear might catch their suppressed murmurs; even the heavens, for the morning was bleak and cloudy, seemed to look down with cold indifference on the scene. No sooner, however, had Gregory, with the Emperor, passed the rails which divided the sanctuary from the nave of the church, than the sun

24th Nov. A. D. 380.

BOOK III.

burst forth in his splendour, the clouds were dissipated, and the glorious light came streaming in upon the applauding congregation. At once a shout of acclamation demanded the enthronisation of Gregory.

But Gregory, commanding only in his eloquence from the pulpit, seems to have wanted the firmness and vigour necessary for the prelate of a great metropolis. Theodosius summoned the council of Constantinople; and Gregory, embarrassed by the multiplicity of affairs; harassed by objections to the validity of his own election; entangled in the feuds which arose out of the contested election to the see of Antioch, entreated, and obtained, apparently the unreluctant, assent of the bishops and the Emperor to abdicate his dignity, and to retire to his beloved privacy. His retreat, in some degree disturbed by the interest which he still took in the see of Nazianzum, gradually became more complete, till, at length, he withdrew into solitude, and ended his days in that peace, which perhaps was not less sincerely enjoyed from his experience of the cares and vexations of worldly dignity. Arianza, his native village, was the place of his seclusion; the gardens, the trees, the fountain, familiar to his youth, welcomed his old age. But Gregory had not exhausted the fears, the dangers, or the passions of life. The desires of youth still burned in his withered body, and demanded the severest macerations. The sight or even the neighbourhood of females afflicted his sensitive conscience; and instead of allowing ease or repose to his aged frame,

his bed was a hard mat, his coverlid sackcloth, his dress one thin tunic; his feet were bare; he allowed himself no fire, and here, in the company of the wild-beasts, he prayed with bitter tears, he fasted, and devoted his hours to the composition of poetry, which, from its extreme difficulty, he considered as an act of penitence. His painful existence was protracted to the age of ninety. CHAP. IX.

The complete restoration of Constantinople to the orthodox communion demanded even more powerful eloquence, and far more vigorous authority, than that of Gregory. If it was not finally achieved, its success was secured, by the most splendid orator who had ever adorned the Eastern church. Sixteen years after the retirement of Gregory, the fame of Chrysostom designated him as the successor to that important dignity.

Chrysostom was the model of a preacher for a great capital.* Clear, rather than profound, his dogmatic is essentially moulded up with his moral teaching. He is the champion, not so exclusively of any system of doctrines, as of Christian holiness against the vices, the dissolute manners, the engrossing love of amusement, which prevailed in the new Rome of the East. His doctrines flow naturally from his subject, or from the passage of Scripture under discussion; his illustrations are copious and happy; his style free and fluent; while he is an unrivalled master in that rapid and forcible ap- Chrysostom.

* Compare the several lives of Chrysostom by Palladius, that in the Benedictine edition of his works, and in Tillemont. I have only the first volume of Neander's Joannes Chrysostomus.

BOOK III.

plication of incidental occurrences, which gives such life and reality to eloquence. He is, at times, in the highest sense, dramatic in his manner.

Chrysostom, like all the more ardent spirits of his age, was enamoured in his early youth of monasticism. But this he had gradually thrown off, even while he remained at Antioch. Though by no means formally abandoning these principles, or lowering his admiration of this imaginary perfection of religion, in his later works he is more free, popular, and practical. His ambition is not so much to elevate a few enthusiastic spirits to a high-toned and mystic piety, as to impregnate the whole population of a great capital with Christian virtue and self-denial.

Life of Chrysostom.

John, who obtained the name of Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, was born at Antioch, about the year 347. He was brought up by his mother in the Christian faith; he studied rhetoric under the celebrated Libanius, who used his utmost arts, and displayed all that is captivating in Grecian poetry and philosophy, to enthral the imagination of his promising pupil. Libanius, in an extant epistle, rejoices at the success of Chrysostom at the bar in Antioch. He is said to have lamented on his death-bed the sacrilegious seduction of the young orator by the Christians; for to him he had intended to bequeath his school, and the office of maintaining the dignity of Paganism.

But the eloquence of Chrysostom was not to waste itself in the barren litigations of the courts of justice in Antioch, or in the vain attempt to in-

fuse new life into the dead philosophy and religion of Greece. He felt himself summoned to a nobler field. At the age of eighteen, Chrysostom began to study that one source of eloquence, to which the human heart responded, the sacred writings of the Christians. The church was not slow in recognising the value of such a proselyte. He received the strongest encouragement from Meletius, Bishop of Antioch; he was appointed a reader in the church. But the soul of Chrysostom was not likely to embrace these stirring tenets with coolness or moderation. A zealous friend inflamed, by precept and emulation, the fervour of his piety: they proposed to retire to one of the most remote hermitages in Syria; and the great Christian orator was almost self-doomed to silence, or to exhaust his power of language in prayers and ejaculations, heard by no human ear. The mother of Chrysostom saved the Christian church from this fatal loss. There is something exquisitely touching in the traits of domestic affection which sometimes gleam through the busy pages of history. His mother had become a widow at the age of twenty; to the general admiration, she had remained faithful to the memory of her husband, and to her maternal duties. As soon as she heard the determination of her son to retire to a distant region (Chrysostom himself relates the incident), she took him by the hand, she led him to her chamber, she made him sit by her on the bed, in which she had borne him, and burst out into tears, and into language more sad than tears. She spoke of the cares and troubles of

BOOK III.

widowhood; grievous as they had been, she had ever one consolation, the gazing on his face, and beholding in him the image of his departed father. Before he could speak, he had thus been her comfort and her joy. She reminded him of the fidelity with which she had administered the paternal property. "Think not that I would reproach you with these things. I have but one favour to entreat — make me not a second time a widow; awaken not again my slumbering sorrows. Wait, at least, for my death; perhaps I shall depart before long. When you have laid me in the earth, and reunited my bones to those of your father, then travel wherever thou wilt, even beyond the sea; but, as long as I live, endure to dwell in my house, and offend not God by afflicting your mother, who is at least blameless towards thee." *

Whether released by the death of his mother, or hurried away by the irresistible impulse which would not allow him to withhold himself from what he calls "the true philosophy," Chrysostom, some years afterwards, entered into one of the monasteries in the neighbourhood of Antioch. He had hardly escaped the episcopal dignity, which was almost forced upon him by the admirers of his early piety. Whether he considered this gentle violence lawful to compel devout Christians to assume awful dignity, he did not hesitate to practise a pious fraud on his friend Basilius, with whom he promised to submit to consecration. Basilius

* M. Villemain, in his Essai sur l'Eloquence Chrêtienne dans le Quatrième Siécle, has pointed out the exquisite simplicity and tenderness of this passage. De Sacerdotio, i.

found himself a bishop, but looked in vain for his treacherous friend, who had deceived him into this momentous step, but deserted him at the appointed hour. CHAP. IX.

But the voice of Chrysostom was not doomed to silence even in his seclusion. The secession of so many of the leading youths from the duties of civil life, from the municipal offices and the service of the army, had awakened the jealousy of the government. Valens issued his edict against those "followers of idleness."* The monks were, in some instances, assailed by popular outrage; parents, against whose approbation their children had deserted their homes and retired into the desert, appealed to the imperial authority to maintain their own. Chrysostom came forward as the zealous, the vehement, advocate of the "true philosophy."† He threatened misery in this life, and all the pains of hell (of which he is prodigal in his early writings) against the unnatural, the soul-slaying fathers, who forced their sons to expose themselves to the guilt and danger of the world, and forbade them to enter into the earthly society of angels; thus he describes the monasteries near Antioch. He relates, with triumph, the clandestine conversion of a noble youth, through the connivance of his mother, whom the father, himself a soldier, had destined to serve in the armies of the empire.

But Chrysostom himself, whether he considered that the deep devotion of the monastery, for some

* Ignaviæ sectatores.

† Adversus Oppugnatores Vitæ Monasticæ.

BOOK III.

years, had braced his soul to encounter the more perilous duties of the priesthood, appeared again in Antioch. His return was hailed by Flavianus, the bishop, who had succeeded to Meletius. He was ordained deacon, and then presbyter, and at once took his station in that office, which was sometimes reserved for the Bishop, as the principal preacher in that voluptuous and effeminate city.

The fervid imagination and glowing eloquence of Chrysostom, which had been lavished on the angelic immunity of the cœnobite or the hermit from the passions, ambition, and avarice inseparable from a secular life, now arrayed his new office in a dignity and saintly perfection, which might awake the purest ambition of the Christian. Chrysostom has the most exalted notion of the majesty, at the same time of the severity, of the sacerdotal character. His views of the office, of its mission and authority, are the most sublime ; his demands upon their purity, blamelessness, and superiority to the rest of mankind, proportionably rigorous.

Nor, in the loftiness of his tone as a preacher, or his sanctity as a man, did he fall below his own standard of the Christian priesthood. His preaching already took its peculiar character. It was not so much addressed to the opinions as to the conscience of man. He threw aside the subtleties of speculative theology, and repudiated, in general, the fine-drawn allegory in which the interpreters of Scripture had displayed their ingenuity, and amazed and fruitlessly wearied their unimproved audience. His scope was plain, severe, practical. Rigidly orthodox in his doctrine, he seemed to

dwell more on the fruits of a pure theology (though at times he could not keep aloof from controversy) than on theology itself.

If, in her ordinary course of voluptuous amusement, of constant theatrical excitement, Antioch could not but listen to the commanding voice of the Christian orator, it is no wonder that in her hour of danger, possibly of impending ruin, the whole city stood trembling and awestruck beneath his pulpit. Soon after he assumed the sacerdotal office, Chrysostom was placed in an extraordinary position as the representative of the bishop.

In one of those sudden tumultuous insurrections which take place among the populace of large cities, Antioch had resisted the exorbitant demands of a new taxation, maltreated the imperial officers, and thrown down and dragged about, with every kind of insult, the statues of Theodosius, his empress, and their two sons.* The stupor of fear succeeded to this momentary outbreak of mutiny, which had been quelled by a single troop of archers. For days the whole people awaited in shuddering agitation the sentence of the Emperor. The anger of Theodosius was terrible; he had not yet, it is true, ordered the massacre of the whole population of Thessalonica, but his stern and relentless charac-

A. D. 387.

* It is curious to observe the similarity between the Pagan and Christian accounts of this incident which we have the good fortune to possess. Both ascribe the guilt to a few strangers, under the instigation of diabolic agency. *Τοιούτοις ὑπηρέταις ὁ κακὸς χρώμενος δαίμων, ἔπραξεν, ἃ σιωπᾶν ἐδουλόμην.* This is a sentence of Libanius (ad Theodos. iv. p. 638.), not of Chrysostom. Flavian exhorts Theodosius to pardon Antioch, in order that he may disappoint the malice of the devils, to whom he ascribes the guilt. Chrys. Hom. xvi. ad Antioch.

BOOK III.

ter was too well known. Dark rumours spread abroad that he had threatened to burn Antioch, to exterminate its inhabitants, and to pass the ploughshare over its ruins. Multitudes fled destitute from the city; others remained shut up in their houses, for fear of being seized. Instead of the forum crowded with thousands, one or two persons were seen timidly wandering about. The gay and busy Antioch had the appearance of a captured and depopulated city. The theatres, the circus, were closed; no marriage song was heard; even the schools were shut up.* In the meantime the government resumed its unlimited and unresisted authority, which it administered with the sternest severity, and rigorous inquisition into the guilt of individuals. The prisons were thronged with criminals of every rank and station; confiscation swept away their wealth, punishments of every degree were inflicted on their persons. Citizens of the highest rank were ignominiously scourged; those who confessed their guilt were put to the sword, burned alive, or thrown to the wild beasts.† Chrysostom's description of the agony of those days is in the highest style of dramatic oratory. Women of the highest rank, brought up with the utmost delicacy, and accustomed to every luxury, were seen crowding around the gates, or in the outer judgment hall, unattended, repelled by the rude soldiery, but still clinging to the doors or prostrate on the ground, listening to the clash of

* Liban. ad Theod. in fin.

† Chrysostom asserts this in a fine passage, in which he reminds his hearers of their greater offences against God. Καὶ οἱ μὲν σιδήρῳ, οἱ δὲ πυρὶ, οἱ δὲ θηρίοις παραδοθέντες ἀπώλοντο. Hom. iii. 6. p. 45.

the scourges, the shrieks of the tortured victims, and the shouts of the executioners; one minute supposing that they recognised the familiar voices of fathers, husbands, or brothers; or trembling lest those who were undergoing torture should denounce their relatives and friends. Chrysostom passes from this scene, by a bold but natural transition, to the terrors of the final judgment, and the greater agony of that day.

Now was the time to put to the test the power of Christianity, and to ascertain whether the orthodox opinions of Theodosius were altogether independent of that humanity which is the essence of the Gospel. Would the Christian Emperor listen to the persuasive supplications of the Christian prelate — that prelate for whose character he had expressed the highest respect?

Flavianus sets forth to intercede for mercy.

While Flavianus, the aged and feeble bishop, quitting the bedside of his dying sister, set forth on his pious mission to the West, on Chrysostom devolved the duty of assuaging the fears, of administering consolation, and of profiting by this state of stupor and dejection to correct the vices and enforce serious thoughts upon the light and dissolute people. Day after day he ascended the pulpit; the whole population, deserting the forum, forgetting the theatre and the circus, thronged the churches. There was even an attendance (an unusual circumstance) after the hour of dinner. The whole city became a church. There is wonderful skill and judgment in the art with which the orator employs the circumstances of the time for his pur-

BOOK III.

pose; in the manner in which he allays the terror, without too highly encouraging the hopes, of the people: "The clemency of the Emperor *may* forgive their guilt, but the Christians ought to be superior to the fear of death; they cannot be secure of pardon in this world, but they may be secure of immortality in the world to come."

Sentence of Theodosius.

Long before the success of the bishop's intercession could be known, the delegates of the Emperor, Hellabichus and Cæsarius, arrived with the sentence of Theodosius, which was merciful, if compared with what they had feared, — the destruction of the city, and the massacre of its inhabitants. But it was fatal to the pleasures, the comforts, the pride of Antioch. The theatres and the circus were to be closed; Antioch was no longer to enjoy theatrical representations of any kind; the baths, in an Eastern city not objects of luxury alone, but of cleanliness and health, were to be shut; and Antioch was degraded from the rank of a metropolitan city, to a town under the jurisdiction of Laodicea.

The city was in the deepest depression, but Chrysostom maintained his lofty tone of consolation. Antioch ought to rejoice at the prohibition of those scenes of vice and dissipation, which disgraced the theatres: the baths tended to effeminacy and luxury; they were disdained by true philosophy — the monastic system; the dignity of the city did not depend on its rank in the empire, but on the virtue of its citizens; it might be a heavenly, if no longer an earthly, metropolis.

The inquisition into the guilt of those who had actually assisted, or had looked on in treasonable indifference, while the statues of the Emperor and his family were treated with such unseemly contumely, had commenced under the regular authorities ; it was now carried on with stern and indiscriminate impartiality. The prisoners were crowded together in a great open enclosure, in one close and agonising troop, which comprehended the whole senate of the city. The third day of the inquiry was to witness the execution of the guilty, and no one, not the relatives or kindred of the wealthiest, the noblest, or the highest in station, knew whether the doom had not fallen on their fathers or husbands.

But Hellabichus and Cæsarius were men of humanity, and ventured to suspend the execution of the sentence. They listened to the supplications of the people. One mother, especially, seized and clung to the reins of the horse of Hellabichus. The monks who, while the philosophers, as Chrysostom asserts, had fled the city, had poured down from their mountain solitudes, and during the whole time had endeavoured to assuage the fear of the people, and to awaken the compassion of the government, renewed, not without effect, their pious exertions.* They crowded round the tribunal, and one, named Macedonius, was so courageous as boldly to remonstrate against the crime of avenging the destruction of a few images of brass by the destruction of the image of God in so many hu-

* Chrysostom, Hom. xvii. vol. ii. p. 172.

BOOK III.

man beings. Cæsarius himself undertook a journey to Constantinople for farther instructions.

At length Chrysostom had the satisfaction to announce to the people the return of the bishop with an act of unlimited amnesty. He described the interview of Flavianus with the Emperor; his silence, his shame, his tears, when Theodosius gently reminded him of his benefactions to the city, which enhanced their heinous ingratitude. The reply of Flavianus, though the orator professes to relate it on the authority of one present at the interview, is no doubt coloured by the eloquence of Chrysostom. The Bishop acknowledged the guilt of the city in the most humiliating language. But he urged, that the greater that guilt, the greater would be the magnanimity of the Emperor if he should pardon it. He would raise statues, not of perishable materials, in the hearts of all mankind. It is not the glory of Theodosius, he proceeded, but Christianity itself, which is put to the test before the world. The Jews and Greeks, even the most remote barbarians, are anxiously watching whether this sentence will be that of Christian clemency. How will they all glorify the Christian's God if he shall restrain the wrath of the master of the world, and subdue him to that humanity which would be magnanimous even in a private man. Inexorable punishment might awe other cities into obedience, but mercy would attach mankind by the stronger bonds of love. It would be an imperishable example of clemency, and all future acts of other sovereigns would be but the fruit of this, and would

Issue of the interview of Flavianus with the Emperor.

CHAP. IX.

reflect their glory on Theodosius. What glory to concede that to a single aged priest, from the fear of God, which he had refused to all other suppliants. For himself, Flavianus could never bear to return to his native city; he would remain an exile, until that city was reconciled with the Emperor. Theodosius, it is said, called to mind the prayer of the Saviour for his enemies, and satisfied his wounded pride, that in his mercy he imitated his Redeemer. He was even anxious that Flavianus should return to announce the full pardon before the festival of Easter. "Let the Gentiles," exclaims the ardent preacher, "be confounded, or rather, let them be instructed by this unexampled instance of imperial clemency and episcopal influence." *

A. D. 398. Chrysostom bishop of Constantinople.

Theodosius had ceased to reign many years before Chrysostom was summoned to the pontifical throne of Constantinople. The East was governed by women and eunuchs. In assuming the episcopal throne of the metropolis, to which he is said to have been transported almost by force, Chrysostom, who could not but be conscious of his power over the minds of men, might entertain visions of the noblest and purest ambition. His views of the dignity of the sacerdotal character were as lofty as those of his cotemporaries in the West; while he asserted their authority, which set them apart and far above the rest of mankind, he demanded a moral superiority, and entire devotion to their calling, which could not but

* Chrysostom had ventured to assert—Ἅπερ ὀυδενὶ ἑτέρῳ, ταῦτα χαριεῖται τοῖς ἱερεῦσι. Hom. xxi. 3.

BOOK III.

rivet their authority upon the minds of men. The clergy, such as his glowing imagination conceived them, would unite the strongest corporate spirit with the highest individual zeal and purity. The influence of the bishop in Antioch, the deference which Theodosius had shown to the intercession of Flavianus, might encourage Chrysostom in the fallacious hope of restoring peace, virtue, and piety, as well as orthodoxy, in the imperial city.

Difference of the sacerdotal power in Rome and Constantinople

But in the East, more particularly in the metropolis, the sacerdotal character never assumed the unassailable sanctity, the awful inviolability, which it attained in the West. The religion of Constantinople was that of the Emperor. Instead of growing up, like the Bishop of Rome, first to independence, afterwards to sovereignty, the presence of the imperial government overawed and obscured the religious supremacy. In Rome, the Pope was subject at times to the rebellious control of the aristocracy, or exposed to the irreverent fury of the populace; but he constantly emerged from his transient obscurity, and resumed his power. In Constantinople, a voluptuous court, a savage populace, at this period multitudes of concealed Arians, and heretics of countless shades and hues at all periods, thwarted the plans, debased the dignity, and desecrated the person of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

In some respects, Chrysostom's character wanted the peculiar, and perhaps inconsistent qualifications requisite for his position. He was the preacher, but not the man of the world. A great capital is

apt to demand that magnificence in its prelate at which it murmurs. It will not respect less than splendid state and the show of authority, while at the same time it would have the severest austerity and the strongest display of humility,—the pomp of the Pontiff with the poverty and lowliness of the Apostle. Chrysostom carried the asceticism of the monk not merely into his private chamber, but into his palace and his hall. The great prelates of the West, when it was expedient, could throw off the monk and appear as statesmen or as nobles in their public transactions; though this, indeed, was much less necessary than in Constantinople. But Chrysostom cherished all these habits with zealous, perhaps with ostentatious, fidelity. Instead of munificent hospitality, he took his scanty meal in his solitary chamber. His rigid economy endured none of that episcopal sumptuousness with which his predecessor Nectarius had dazzled the public eye: he proscribed all the carpets, all silken dresses; he sold the costly furniture and the rich vessels of his residence; he was said even to have retrenched from the church some of its gorgeous plate, and to have sold some rich marbles and furniture designed for the Anastasia. He was lavish, on the other hand, in his expenditure on the hospitals and charitable institutions. But even the use to which they were applied, did not justify to the general feeling the alienation of those ornaments from the service of the church. The populace, who, no doubt, in their hours of discontent, had contrasted the magnificence of Nectarius with apostolical poverty, were

BOOK III.

now offended by the apostolical poverty of Chrysostom, which seemed unworthy of his lofty station.

Political difficulties of Chrysostom.

But the Bishop of Constantinople had even a more difficult task in prescribing to himself the limits of his interference with secular affairs. It is easy to imagine, in the clergy, a high and serene indifference to the political tumults of society. This is perpetually demanded by those who find the sacerdotal influence adverse to their own views; but to the calm inquirer, this simple question becomes the most difficult and intricate problem in religious history. If religion consisted solely in the intercourse between man and his Creator; if the Christian minister were merely the officiating functionary in the ceremonial of the church, — the human mediator between the devotion of man and the providence of God, — the voice which expresses the common adoration, — the herald who announces the general message of revelation to mankind, — nothing could be more clear than the line which might exclude him from all political, or even all worldly affairs. But Christianity is likewise a moral power; and as that moral power or guide, religion, and the minister of religion, cannot refrain from interposing in all questions of human conduct; as the interpreter of the divine law to the perplexed and doubting conscience, it cannot but spread its dominion over the whole field of human action. In this character, religion embraced the whole life of man, public as well as private. How was the minister of that religion to pause and discriminate as to the extent of his powers, particularly since the public acts

Interference of the clergy in secular affairs.

of the most eminent in station possessed such unlimited influence over the happiness of society, and even the eternal welfare of the whole community? What public misconduct was not at the same time an unchristian act? Were the clergy, by connivance, to become accomplices in vices which they did not endeavour to counteract? Christianity on the throne, as in the cottage, was equally bound to submit on every point in which religious motive or principle ought to operate, in every act, therefore, of life, to the admitted restraints of the Gospel; and the general feeling of Christianity at this period had invested the clergy with the right, or rather the duty, of enforcing the precepts of the Gospel on every professed believer. How, then, were the clergy to distinguish between the individual and political capacity of the man; to respect the prince, yet to advise the Christian; to look with indifference on one set of actions as secular, to admonish on the danger of another as affairs of conscience?

Nor at this early period of its still aggressive, still consciously beneficial influence, could the hierarchy be expected to anticipate with coldly prophetic prudence the fatal consequence of some of its own encroachments on worldly authority. The bishop of a great capital was the conductor, the representative, of the moral power of the Gospel, which was perpetually striving to obtain its ascendancy over brute force, violence, and vice; and of necessity, perhaps, was not always cautious or discreet in the means to which it resorted. It became contami-

BOOK III.

nated in the incessant strife, and forgot its end, or rather sought for the mastery, as its end, rather than as the legitimate means of promoting its beneficial objects. Under the full, and no doubt, at first, warrantable persuasion, that it was advancing the happiness and virtue of mankind, where should it arrest its own course, or set limits to its own humanising and improving interpositions? Thus, under the constant temptation of assuming, as far as possible, the management of affairs which were notoriously mismanaged through the vices of public men, the administration even of public matters by the clergy might seem, to them at least, to insure justice, disinterestedness, and clemency: till tried by the possession of power, they would be the last to discern the danger of being invested in that power.

Eutropius the eunuch.

The first signal interposition of Chrysostom in the political affairs of Constantinople was an act not merely of humanity but of gratitude. Eutropius the eunuch, minister of the feeble Arcadius, is condemned to immortal infamy by the vigorous satire of Claudian. Among his few good deeds, had been the advancement of Chrysostom to the see of Constantinople. Eutropius had found it necessary to restrict the right of asylum, which began to be generally claimed by all the Christian churches, little foreseeing that to the bold assertion of that right he would owe his life.

Right of asylum.

There is something sublime in the first notion of the right of asylum. It is one of those institutions based in the universal religious sentiment of

man; it is found in almost all religions. In the Greek, as in the Jewish, man took refuge from the vengeance, often from the injustice, of his fellow men, in the presence of the gods. Not merely private revenge, but the retributive severity of the law, stands rebuked before the dignity of the divine court, in which the criminal has lodged his appeal. The lustrations in the older religions, the rites of expiation and reconciliation performed in many of the temples, the appellations of certain deities, as the reconcilers or pacifiers of man *, were enwoven with their mythology, and embodied in their poetry. But Christianity, in a still higher and more universal sense, might assume to take under its protection, in order to amend and purify, the outcast of society, whom human justice followed with relentless vengeance. As the representative of the God of mercy, it excluded no human being from the pale of repentance, and would protect them, when disposed to that salutary change, if it could possibly be made consistent with the public peace and safety. The merciful intervention of the clergy between the criminal and his sentence, at a period when the laws were so implacable and sanguinary, was at once consistent with Christian charity, and tended to some mitigation of the ferocious manners of the age. It gave time at least for exasperated justice to reconsider its sentence, and checked that vindictive impulse, which if it did not outrun the law, turned it into instantaneous and irrevocable execution.† But

* The ἀποτροπαιοὶ, or averruncatores.

† In a law which is extant in Greek, there is an elaborate argument, that if the right of asylum had been granted by the Heathen

BOOK III.

that which commenced in pure benevolence had already, it should seem, begun to degenerate into a source of power. The course of justice was impeded, but not by a wise discrimination between the more or less heinous delinquents, or a salutary penitential system, which might reclaim the guilty, and safely restore him to society.

A. D. 399.

Like other favourites of arbitrary sovereigns, Eutropius was suddenly precipitated from the height of power; the army forced the sentence of his dismissal from the timid Emperor, and the furious populace, as usual, thirsted for the blood of him to whose unbounded sway they had so long submitted in humble obedience. Eutropius fled in haste to that asylum, the sanctity of which had been limited by his own decree; and the courage and influence of Chrysostom protected that most forlorn of human beings, the discarded favourite of a despot. The armed soldiery and the raging populace were met at the door of the church by the defenceless ecclesiastic; his demeanour and the sanctity of the place arrested the blind fury of the assailants; Chrysostom before the Emperor pleaded the cause of Eutropius with the same fearless freedom, and for once the life of a fallen minister was

Chrysostom saves the life of Eutropius.

to their altars, and to the statues of the Emperors, it ought to belong to the temples of God.

See the laws which defined the right of asylum, Cod. Theodos. ix. 45. 3. *et seqq.* The sacred space extended to the outer gates of the church. But those who took refuge in the church were on no account to be permitted to profane the holy building itself by eating or sleeping within it. "Quibus si perfuga non adnuit, neque consentit, præferenda humanitati religio est." There was a strong prohibition against introducing arms into the churches; a prohibition which the Emperors themselves did not scruple to violate on more than one occasion.

spared, his sentence was commuted for banishment. His fate indeed was only delayed, he was afterwards brought back from Cyprus, his place of exile, and beheaded at Chalcedon.

But with all his courage, his eloquence, his moral dignity, Chrysostom, instead of establishing a firm and permanent authority over Constantinople, became himself the victim of intrigue and jealousy. Besides his personal habits and manners, the character of Chrysostom, firm on great occasions, and eminently persuasive when making a general address to the multitude, was less commanding and authoritative in his constant daily intercourse with the various orders: calm and self-possessed as an orator, he was accused of being passionate and overbearing in ordinary business: the irritability of feeble health may have caused some part of this infirmity. Men, whose minds, like that of Chrysostom, are centered on one engrossing object, are apt to abandon the details of business to others, who thus become necessary to them, and at length, if artful and dextrous, rule them with inextricable sway: they have much knowledge of mankind, little practical acquaintance with individual men. Thus, Chrysostom was completely governed by his deacon Serapion, who managed his affairs, and like all men of address in such stations, while he exercised all the power, and secured the solid advantages, left the odium and responsibility upon his master. On the whole, the character of Chrysostom retained something of the unworldly monastic enthusiasm, and wanted

Chrysostom governed by his deacon Serapion.

BOOK III.

decisive practical wisdom, when compared, for instance, with Ambrose in the West, and thus his character powerfully contributed to his fall.*

But the circumstances of his situation might have embarrassed even Ambrose himself. All orders and interests conspired against him. The court would not endure the grave and severe censor; the clergy rebelled against the rigour of the prelate's discipline; the populace, though when under the spell of his eloquence, fondly attached to his person, no doubt, in general resented his implacable condemnation of their amusements. The Arians, to whom, in his uncompromising zeal, he had persuaded the Emperor to refuse a single church, though demanded by the most powerful subject of the empire, Gainas the Goth, were still no doubt secretly powerful. A Pagan præfect, Optatus, seized the opportunity of wreaking his animosity towards Christianity itself, upon its powerful advocate. Some wealthy females are named as resenting the severe condemnation of their dress and manners.†

Of all these adversaries, the most dangerous, the most persevering, and the most implacable, were those of his own order and his own rank.‡ The sacerdotal authority in the East was undermined by its own divisions. The imperial power, which, in the

* The unfavourable view of Chrysostom's character is brought out perhaps with more than impartiality by the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen, who wrote at Constantinople, and may have preserved much of the hostile tradition relating to him.

† Tillemont, p. 180.

‡ The good Tillemont confesses this humiliating truth with shame and reluctance. Vie de Chrysostome, p. 181.

hands of a violent, and not irreproachable woman, the Empress Eudoxia, might, perhaps, have quailed before the energy of a blameless and courageous prelate, allied itself with one section of the church, and so secured its triumph over the whole. The more Chrysostom endeavoured to carry out by episcopal authority those exalted notions of the sacerdotal character, which he had developed in his work upon the priesthood, the more he estranged many of his natural supporters. He visited the whole of Asia Minor; degraded bishops; exposed with unsparing indignation the vices and venality of the clergy; and involved them all in one indiscriminate charge of simony and licentiousness. The assumption of this authority was somewhat questionable; the severity with which it was exercised did not reconcile the reluctant province to submission. Among the malcontent clergy, four bishops took the lead; but the head of this unrelenting faction was Theophilus, the violent and unscrupulous Prelate of Alexandria. The apparently trivial causes which inflamed the hostility of Theophilus confirm a suspicion, previously suggested, that the rivalry of the two principal sees in the East mingled with the personal animosity of Theophilus against the Bishop of Constantinople. Chrysostom had been accused of extending his jurisdiction beyond its legitimate bounds. Certain monks of Nitria had fled from the persecutions of Theophilus, and taken refuge in Constantinople; and Chrysostom had extended his countenance, if not his protection, to these revolted subjects of the Alexandrian prelate;

Theophilus of Alexandria.

BOOK III.

but he had declined to take legal cognisance of the dispute as a superior prelate, or as the head of a council; partly, he states*, out of respect for Theophilus, partly because he was unwilling to interfere in the affairs of another province. But Theophilus was not so scrupulous; he revenged himself for the supposed invasion of his own province by a most daring inroad on that of his rival. He assumed for the Patriarch of Alexandria the right of presiding over the Eastern bishops, and of summoning the Bishop of Constantinople before this irregular tribunal. Theophilus, with the sanction, if not by the invitation, of the Empress, landed at Constantinople. He was accompanied by a band of Alexandrian mariners, as a protection against the populace of the city.

Council of the Oak.

The council was held, not in Constantinople, but at a place called the Oak, in the suburbs of Chalcedon. It consisted for the most part of Egyptian bishops, under the direct influence of Theophilus, and of Asiatic prelates, the personal enemies of Chrysostom.† For fourteen days it held its sessions, and received informations, which gradually grew into twenty-nine grave and specific charges. Four times was Chrysostom summoned to appear before this self-appointed tribunal, of which it was impossible for him to recognise the legal authority. In the meantime, he was not inactive in his peculiar sphere — the pulpit. Unfortunately, the authenticity of the sermon ascribed to him at this period

* Epist. ad Innocentium Papam, vol. iii. p. 516.

† It is contested whether there were thirty or forty-six bishops.

is not altogether certain, nor the time at which some extant discourses, if genuine, were delivered, conclusively settled. One, however, bears strong indications of the manner and sentiments of Chrysostom; and it is generally acknowledged that he either did boldly use, or was accused of using, language full of contumelious allusion to the Empress. This sermon, therefore, if not an accurate report of his expressions, may convey the sense of what he actually uttered, or which was attributed to him by his adversaries.* "The billows," said the energetic prelate, "are mighty, and the storm furious; but we fear not to be wrecked, for we are founded on a rock. What can I fear? Death? *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* Exile? *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.* Confiscation? *We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out of it.* I scorn the terrors, and smile at the advantages, of life. I fear not death. I desire to live only for your profit. The church against which you strive, dashes away your assaults into idle foam. It is fixed by God,

* It is singularly characteristic of the Christianity of the times to observe the charges against which Chrysostom protests with the greatest vehemence; and this part of the oration in question is confirmed by one of his letters to Cyriacus. Against that of personal impurity with a female, he calmly offers the most unquestionable evidence. But he was likewise accused of having administered baptism after he had eaten. On this he breaks out:—"If I have done this, Anathema upon me, may I be no longer counted among bishops, nor be admitted among the angels accepted of God." He was said to have administered the sacrament to those who had in like manner broken their fast. "If I have done so, may I be rejected of Christ." He then justifies himself, even if guilty, by the example of Paul, and even of Christ himself, but still seems to look on this breach of discipline with the utmost horror.

BOOK III.

who shall revoke it? The church is stronger than Heaven itself! *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* * * * But you know, my brethren, the true cause of my ruin. Because I have not strewn rich carpets on my floors, nor clothed myself in silken robes; because I have discountenanced the sensuality of certain persons. The seed of the serpent is still alive, but grace is still on the side of Elijah." Then follows in obscure and embarrassed language, as though, if genuine, the preacher were startled at his own boldness, an allusion to the fate of John the Baptist, and to the hostility of Herodias: — "It is a time of wailing — lo, all things tend to *disgrace;* but time judgeth all things." The fatal word, "*disgrace,*" (ἀδοξία) was supposed to be an allusion to Eudoxia, the Empress.

Condemnation of Chrysostom.

There was a secret understanding between the court and the council. The court urged the proceedings of the council, and the council pronounced the sentence of deposition, but left to the court to take cognisance of the darker charge of high treason, of which they asserted Chrysostom to be guilty, but which was beyond their jurisdiction. The alleged treason was the personal insult to the Empress Eudoxia, which was construed into exciting the people to rebellion. But the execution of this sentence embarrassed the council and the irresolute government. Chrysostom now again ruled the popular mind with unbounded sway. It would have been dangerous to have seized him in the church, environed, as he constantly was, by crowds of ad-

miring hearers, whom a few fervent words might have maddened into insurrection.

Chrysostom leaves Constantinople.

Chrysostom, however, shrunk, whether from timidity or Christian peacefulness of disposition, from being the cause, even innocently, of tumult and bloodshed. He had neither the ambition, the desperate recklessness, nor perhaps the resolution, of a demagogue. He would not be the Christian tribune of the people. He seized the first opportunity of the absence of his hearers quietly to surrender himself to the imperial officers. He was cautiously transported by night, though the jealous populace crowded the streets, in order to release their prelate from the hands of his enemies, to the opposite side of the Bosphorus, and confined in a villa on the Bithynian shore.

The triumph of Chrysostom's enemies was complete. Theophilus entered the city, and proceeded to wreak his vengeance on the partisans of his adversary; the Empress rejoiced in the conscious assurance of her power; the people were overawed into gloomy and sullen silence.

Earthquake.

The night of the following day, strange and awful sounds were heard throughout the city. The palace, the whole of Constantinople, shook with an earthquake. The Empress, as superstitious as she was violent, when she felt her chamber rock beneath her, shuddering at the manifest wrath of Heaven, fell on her knees, and entreated the Emperor to revoke the fatal sentence. She wrote a hasty letter, disclaiming all hostility to the banished prelate, and protesting that she was "innocent of his blood."

BOOK III.

Return of Chrysostom.

The next day, the palace was surrounded by clamorous multitudes, impatiently demanding his recall. The voice of the people and the voice of God seemed to join in the vindication of Chrysostom. The edict of recall was issued; the Bosphorus swarmed with barks, eager to communicate the first intelligence, and to obtain the honour of bringing back the guardian and the pride of the city. He was met on his arrival by the whole population, men, women, and children; all who could, bore torches in their hands, and hymns of thanksgiving, composed for the occasion, were chaunted before him, as he proceeded to the great church. His enemies fled on all sides. Soon after, Theophilus, on the demand of a free council, left Constantinople, at the dead of night, and embarked for Alexandria.

There is again some doubt as to the authenticity of the first discourse delivered by Chrysostom on this occasion, — none of the second. But the first was an extemporaneous address, to which the extant speech appears to correspond. "What shall I say? Blessed be God! These were my last words on my departure, these the first on my return. Blessed be God! because he permitted the storm to rage; Blessed be God! because he has allayed it. Let my enemies behold how their conspiracy has advanced my peace, and redounded to my glory. Before, the church alone was crowded, now, the whole forum is become a church. The games are celebrating in the circus, but the whole people pour like a torrent to the church. Your

prayers in my behalf are more glorious than a diadem, — the prayers both of men and women; for in *Christ there is neither male nor female.*"

In the second oration he draws an elaborate comparison between the situation of Abraham in Egypt and his own. The barbarous Egyptian (this struck, no doubt, at Theophilus) had endeavoured to defile his Sarah, the church of Constantinople; but the faithful church had remained, by the power of God, uncontaminated by this rebuked Abimelech. He dwelt with pardonable pride on the faithful attachment of his followers. They had conquered; but how? by prayer and submission. The enemy had brought arms into the sanctuary, they had prayed; like a spider's web the enemy had been scattered, they remained firm as a rock. The Empress herself had joined the triumphal procession, when the sea became, as the city, covered with all ranks, all ages, and both sexes.*

But the peace and triumph of Chrysostom were not lasting. As the fears of the Empress were allayed, the old feeling of hatred to the Bishop, embittered by the shame of defeat, and the constant suspicion that either the preacher or his audience pointed at her his most vigorous declamation, rankled in the mind of Eudoxia. It had become a strife for ascendancy, and neither could recede with safety and honour. Opportunities could not but occur to enrage and exasperate; nor would ill-

* Chrysostom, in both these discourses, states a curious circumstance, that the Jews of Constantinople took great interest in his cause.

BOOK III.

disposed persons be wanting to inflame the passions of the Empress, by misrepresenting and personally applying the bold and indignant language of the prelate.

Statue of the Empress.

A statue of the Empress was about to be erected; and on these occasions of public festival the people were wont to be indulged in dances, pantomimes, and every kind of theatrical amusement. The zeal of Chrysostom was always especially directed against these idolatrous amusements, which often, he confesses, drained the church of his hearers. This, now ill-timed, zeal was especially awakened, because the statue was to be erected, and the rejoicings to take place, in front of the entrance to the great church, the St. Sophia. His denunciations were construed into personal insults to the Empress; she threatened a new council. The prelate threw off the remaining restraints of prudence; repeated more explicitly the allusion which he had before but covertly hinted. He thundered out a homily, with the memorable exordium, "Herodias is maddening, Herodias is dancing, Herodias demands the head of John." If Chrysostom could even be suspected of such daring outrage against the temporal sovereign; if he ventured on language approaching to such unmeasured hostility; it was manifest that either the imperial authority must quail and submit to the sacerdotal domination, or employ, without scruple, its power to crush the bold usurpation.

Second condemnation of Chrysostom.

An edict of the Emperor suspended the prelate from his functions. Though forty-two bishops

adhered, with inflexible fidelity, to his cause, he was condemned by a second hostile council, not on any new charge, but for contumacy, in resisting the decrees of the former assembly, and for a breach of the ecclesiastical laws, in resuming his authority while under the condemnation of a council.

A. D. 404. Tumults in the church.

The soldiers of the Emperor were more dangerous enemies than the prelates. In the midst of the solemn celebration of Good Friday, in the great church of Santa Sophia, the military forced their way, not merely into the nave, but up to the altar, on which were placed the consecrated elements. Many were trodden under foot; many wounded by the swords of the soldiers; the clergy were dragged to prison; some females, who were about to be baptized, were obliged to fly with their disordered apparel: the waters of the font were stained with blood; the soldiers pressed up to the altar; seized the sacred vessels as their plunder: the sacred elements were scattered about; their garments were bedewed with the blood of the Redeemer.* Constantinople for several days had the appearance of a city which had been stormed. Wherever the partisans of Chrysostom were assembled, they were assaulted and dispersed by the soldiery; females were exposed to insult, and one frantic attempt was made to assassinate the prelate.†

Chrysostom at length withdrew from the contest;

* Chrysostom, Epist. ad Innocentium, c. iii. v. iii. p. 519. Chrysostom exempts the Emperor from all share in this outrage, but attributes it to the hostile bishops.

† See Letter to Olympias, p. 548.

BOOK III.

Chrysostom surrenders.

he escaped from the friendly custody of his adherents, and surrendered himself to the imperial officers. He was immediately conveyed by night to the Asiatic shore. At the instant of his departure, another fearful calamity agitated the public mind. The church which he left, burst into flames, and the conflagration, said to have first broken out in the episcopal throne, reached the roof of the building, and spread from thence to the senate-house. These two magnificent edifices, the latter of which contained some noble specimens of ancient art, became in a few hours a mass of ruins. The partisans of Chrysostom, and Chrysostom himself, were, of course, accused of this act, the author of which was never discovered, and in which no life was lost. But the bishop was charged with the horrible design of destroying his enemies in the church; his followers were charged with the guilt of incendiarism with a less atrocious object, that no bishop after Chrysostom might be seated in his pontifical throne.*

The prelate was not permitted to choose his place of exile. The peaceful spots which might have been found in the more genial climate of Bithynia, or the adjacent provinces, would have been too near the capital. He was transported to Cucusus, a small town in the mountainous and

* There are three laws in the Theodosian Code against unlawful and seditious meetings (conventicula), directed against the followers of Chrysostom, — the Joannitæ, as they were called, "qui sacrilego animo auctoritatem nostri numinis ausi fuerint expugnare." The *deity* is the usual term, but the deity of the feeble Arcadius, and the passionate Eudoxia, reads strangely.

savage district of Armenia. On his journey thither of several days, he suffered much from fever and disquiet of mind, and from the cruelty of the officer who commanded the guard.

His retreat.

Yet his influence was not extinguished by his absence. The Eastern Church was almost governed from the solitary cell of Chrysostom. He corresponded with all quarters; women of rank and opulence sought his solitude in disguise. The bishops of many distant sees sent him assistance, and coveted his advice. The Bishop of Rome received his letters with respect, and wrote back ardent commendations of his patience. The exile of Cucusus exercised perhaps more extensive authority than the Patriarch of Constantinople.*

He was not, however, permitted to remain in peace in this miserable seclusion: sometimes his life was endangered by the invasions of the Isaurian marauders; and he was obliged to take refuge in a neighbouring fortress, named Ardissa. He encouraged his ardent disciples with the hope, the assurance, of his speedy return; but he miscalculated the obstinate and implacable resentment of his persecutors. At length an order came to remove

* Among his letters may be remarked those written to the celebrated Olympias. This wealthy widow, who had refused the solicitations or commands of Theodosius to marry one of his favourites, had almost washed away, by her austerities and virtues, the stain of her nuptials, and might rank in Christian estimation with those unsullied virgins who had never been contaminated by marriage. She was the friend of all the distinguished and orthodox clergy,—of Gregory of Nazianzum, and of Chrysostom. Chrysostom records to her *praise*, that by her austerities, she had brought on painful diseases, which baffled the art of medicine. Chrysost. Epist. viii. p. 540.

BOOK III.

him to Pityus, on the Euxine, a still more savage place on the verge of the empire. He died on the journey, near Comana, in Pontus.

His remains transported to Constantinople.

Some years afterwards, the remains of Chrysostom were transported to Constantinople with the utmost reverence, and received with solemn pomp. Constantinople, and the imperial family, submitted with eager zeal to worship as a saint him whom they would not endure as a prelate.

The remarkable part in the whole of this persecution of Chrysostom is that it arose not out of difference of doctrine, or polemic hostility. No charge of heresy darkened the pure fame of the great Christian orator. His persecution had not the dignity of conscientious bigotry; it was a struggle for power between the temporal and ecclesiastical supremacy; but the passions and the personal animosities of ecclesiastics, the ambition, and perhaps the jealousy of the Alexandrian Patriarch, as to jurisdiction, lent themselves to the degradation of the episcopal authority in Constantinople, from which it never rose. No doubt the choleric temper, the overstrained severity, the monastic habits, the ambition to extend his authority, perhaps beyond its legitimate bounds, and the indiscreet zeal of Chrysostom, laid him open to his adversaries; but in any other station, in the episcopate of any other city, these infirmities would have been lost in the splendour of his talents and his virtues. Though he might not have weaned the general mass of the people from their vices, or their amusements, which he proscribed with equal

severity, yet he would have commanded general respect; and nothing less than a schism, arising out of religious difference, would have shaken or impaired his authority.

At all events, the fall of Chrysostom was an inauspicious omen, and a warning which might repress the energy of future prelates; and, doubtless, the issue of this conflict materially tended to degrade the office of the chief bishop in the Eastern empire. It may be questioned whether the proximity of the court, and such a court as that of the East, would, under any circumstances, have allowed the episcopate to assume its legitimate power, far less to have encroached on the temporal sovereignty. But after this time, the Bishop of Constantinople almost sank into a high officer of state; appointed by the influence, if not directly nominated by the Emperor, his gratitude was bound to reverence, or his prudence to dread, that arbitrary power which had raised him from nothing, and might dismiss him to his former insignificance. Except on some rare occasions, he bowed with the rest of the empire before the capricious will of the sovereign or the ruling favourite; he was content if the Emperor respected the outward ceremonial of the church, and did not openly espouse any heretical doctrine.

Christianity thus remained, in some respects, an antagonist principle, counteracting by its perpetual remonstrance, and rivalling by its attractive ceremonial, the vices and licentious diversions of the capital; but its moral authority was not allied with

BOOK III.

power; it quailed under the universal despotism, and was entirely inefficient as a corrective of imperial tyranny. It thus escaped the evils inseparable from the undue elevation of the sacerdotal character, and the temptations to encroach beyond its proper limits on the civil power; but it likewise gradually sank far below that uncompromising independence, that venerable majesty, which might impose some restraint on the worst excesses of violence, and infuse justice and humanity into the manners of the court and of the people.

CHAP. X.

THE GREAT PRELATES OF THE WEST.

Ambrose Archbishop of Milan.

The character and the fate of Ambrose offer the strongest contrast with that of Chrysostom. Ambrose was no dreaming solitary brought up in the seclusion of the desert, or among a fraternity of religious husbandmen. He had been versed in civil business from his youth; he had already obtained a high station in the Imperial service. His eloquence had little of the richness, imaginative variety, or dramatic power of the Grecian orator; hard but vigorous, it was Roman, forensic, practical — we mean where it related to affairs of business, or addressed men in general; it has, as we shall hereafter observe, a very different character in some of his theological writings.

In Ambrose the sacerdotal character assumed a dignity and an influence as yet unknown; it first began to confront the throne, not only on terms of equality, but of superior authority, and to exercise a spiritual dictatorship over the supreme magistrate. The resistance of Athanasius to the Imperial authority had been firm but deferential, passive rather than aggressive. In his *public* addresses he had respected the majesty of the empire; at all events, the hierarchy of that period only questioned the authority of the sovereign in matters of faith. But in Ambrose the episcopal power acknowledged

BOOK III.

no limits to its moral dominion, and admitted on distinction of persons. While the bishops of Rome were comparatively without authority, and still partially obscured by the concentration of Paganism in the aristocracy of the Capitol, the Archbishop of Milan began to develop papal power and papal imperiousness. Ambrose was the spiritual ancestor of the Hildebrands and the Innocents. Like Chrysostom, Ambrose had to strive against the passionate animosity of an empress, not merely exasperated against him by his suspected disrespect and disobedience, but by the bitterness of religious difference. Yet how opposite the result! And Ambrose had to assert his religious authority, not against the feeble Arcadius, but against his father, the great Theodosius. We cannot indeed but recognise something of the undegraded Roman of the West in Ambrose; Chrysostom has something of the feebleness and degeneracy of the Byzantine.

Youth of Ambrose.

The father of Ambrose, who bore the same name, had administered the province of Gaul, as prætorian prefect. The younger Ambrose, while pursuing his studies at Rome, had attracted the notice of Probus, prætorian prefect of Italy. Ambrose, through his influence, was appointed to the administration of the provinces of Æmilia and Liguria.* Probus was a Christian, and his parting admonition to the young civilian was couched in these prophetic words — "Rule the province,

* Chiefly from the life of Ambrose affixed to the Benedictine edition of his works; the Life by Paulinus; and Tillemont.

not as a judge, but as a bishop." * Milan was within the department assigned to Ambrose. This city had now begun almost to rival or eclipse Rome, as the capital of the Occidental empire, and from the celebrity of its schools it was called the Athens of the West. The Church of Milan was rent with divisions. On a vacancy caused by the death of Auxentius, the celebrated Arian, the two parties, the Arian and the Athanasian, violently contested the appointment of the bishop.

Ambrose Bishop. A. D. 374.

Ambrose appeared in his civil character to allay the tumult, by the awe of his presence, and by the persuasive force of his eloquence. He spoke so wisely, and in such a Christian spirit, that a general acclamation suddenly broke forth, "Ambrose, be bishop—Ambrose, be bishop." Ambrose was yet only a catechumen; he attempted in every way, by assuming a severe character as a magistrate, and by flight, to elude the unexpected honour.† The ardour of the people, and the approbation of the Emperor ‡, compelled him to assume the office. Ambrose cast off at once the pomp and majesty of his civil state; but that which was in some degree disadvantageous to Chrysostom, his severe simplicity of life, only increased the admiration and attachment of the less luxurious, or at least less effeminate, West, to their pious prelate: for Ambrose assumed only the austerity, nothing of the inactive and contemplative seclusion of the monas-

* Paull. Vit. Ambros. 8.

† De Offic.; Vita S. Ambros. p. xxxiv.; Epist. xxi. p. 865.; Epist. lxiii.

‡ Compare the account of Valentinian's conduct in Theodoret, iv. 7.

BOOK III.

Ambrose advocate of celibacy.

tic system. The only Eastern influence which fettered his strong mind was his earnest admiration of celibacy; in all other respects he was a Roman statesman, not a meditative Oriental, or rhetorical Greek. The strong contrast of this doctrine with the dissolute manners of Rome, which no doubt extended to Milan, made it the more impressive: it was received with all the ardour of novelty, and the impetuosity of the Italian character; it captivated all ranks and all orders. Mothers shut up their daughters, lest they should be exposed to the chaste seduction of the bishop's eloquence; and, binding themselves by rash vows of virginity, forfeit the hope of becoming Roman matrons. Ambrose, immediately on his appointment, under Valentinian I., asserted that ecclesiastical power which he confirmed under the feeble reign of Gratian and Valentinian II.*; he maintained it when he was confronted by a nobler antagonist, the great Theodosius. He assumed the office of director of the royal conscience, and he administered it with all the uncompromising moral dignity which had no indulgence for unchristian vices, for injustice, or cruelty, even in an emperor, and with all the stern and conscientious intolerance of one, with whom hatred of paganism and of heresy were articles of his creed. The Old and the New Testament met in the person of Ambrose—the implacable hostility to idolatry, the abhorrence of every deviation from the established formulary of belief; the wise and courageous benevolence, the

* Theodoret, iv. 7.

generous and unselfish devotion to the great interests of humanity.

If Christianity assumed a haughtier and more rigid tone in the conduct and writings of Ambrose, it was by no means forgetful of its gentler duties, in allaying human misery, and extending its beneficent care to the utmost bounds of society. With Ambrose it began its high office of mitigating the horrors of slavery, which now that war raged in turn on every frontier, might seem to threaten individually the whole free population of the empire. Rome, who had drawn new supplies of slaves from almost every frontier of her dominions, now suffered fearful reprisals; her free citizens were sent into captivity and sold in the markets by the barbarians, whose ancestors had been bought and bartered by her insatiable slave trade. The splendid offerings of piety, the ornaments, even the consecrated vessels of the churches, were prodigally expended by the Bishop of Milan, in the redemption of captives.* "The church possesses gold, not to treasure up, but to distribute it for the welfare and happiness of men. We are ransoming the souls of men from eternal perdition. It is not merely the lives of men, and the honour of women, which are endangered in captivity, but the faith of their children. The blood of redemption which has gleamed in those golden cups has sanctified them, not for the service alone, but for the redemption of man." †

Redemption of captives by Ambrose.

* Numerent quos redemerint templa captivos. So Ambrose appeals, in excusable pride, to the heathen orator. Ambros. Epist. ii., in Symmachum.

† Offic. c. 15. c. 28.

BOOK III.

These arguments may be considered as a generous repudiation of the ecclesiastical spirit for the nobler ends of beneficence; and, no doubt, in that mediation of the church between mankind and the miseries of slavery, which was one of her most constant and useful ministrations during the darker period of human society, the example and authority of Ambrose perpetually encouraged the generosity of the more liberal, and repressed the narrow view of those who considered the consecrated treasures of the church inviolable, even for these more sacred objects.*

The ecclesiastical zeal of Ambrose, like that of Chrysostom, scorned the limits of his own diocese. The see of Sirmium was vacant; Ambrose appeared in that city to prevent the election of an Arian, and to secure the appointment of an orthodox

A. D. 379. bishop. The strength of the opposite party lay in the zeal and influence of the Empress Justina. Ambrose defied both, and made himself a powerful and irreconcilable enemy.

A. D. 383. But, for a time, Justina was constrained to suppress her resentment. In a few years, Ambrose appears in a new position for a Christian bishop, as the mediator between rival competitors for the empire. The ambassador sent to Maximus (who had assumed the purple in Gaul, and, after the murder of Gratian, might be reasonably suspected of hostile designs on Italy), was no distinguished warrior, or influential civilian; the difficult nego-

* Even Fleury argues that these could not be *consecrated* vessels.

CHAP. X.

A. D. 375.

ciation was forced upon the bishop of Milan. The character and weight of Ambrose appeared the best protection of the young Valentinian. Ambrose is said to have refused to communicate with Maximus, the murderer of his sovereign. The interests of his earthly monarch or of the empire would not induce him to sacrifice for an instant those of his heavenly Master; he would have no fellowship with the man of blood.* Yet so completely, either by his ability as a negociator, or his dignity and sanctity as a prelate, did he overawe the usurper, as to avert the evils of war, and to arrest the hostile invasion of his diocese and of Italy. He succeeded in establishing peace.

Dispute with the Empress Justina.

But the gratitude of Justina for this essential service could not avert the collision of hostile religious creeds. The Empress demanded one of the churches in Milan for the celebration of the Arian service. The first and more modest request named the Porcian Basilica without the gates, but these demands rose to the new and largest edifice within the walls.† The answer of Ambrose was firm and distinct; it asserted the inviolability of all property in the possession of the church—"A bishop cannot alienate that which is dedicated to God." After some fruitless negociation, the officers of the Emperor proceeded to take possession of the Porcian Basilica. Where these buildings had belonged to the state, the Emperor might still, perhaps, assert the right of property. Tumults

* The seventeenth Epistle of Ambrose relates the whole transaction, p. 852.

† Paul. Vit. Ambrose. Ambros. Epist. xx.

BOOK III.

arose: an Arian priest was severely handled, and only rescued from the hands of the populace by the influence of Ambrose Many wealthy persons were thrown into prison by the government, and heavy fines exacted on account of these seditions. But the inflexible Ambrose persisted in his refusal to acknowledge the imperial authority over things dedicated to God. When he was commanded to allay the populace, "it is in my power," he answered, "to refrain from exciting their violence, but it is for God to appease it when excited.* The soldiers surrounded the building; they threatened to violate the sanctity of the church, in which Ambrose was performing the usual solemnities. The bishop calmly continued his functions, and his undisturbed countenance seemed as if his whole mind was absorbed in its devotion. The soldiers entered the church; the affrighted females began to fly; but the rude and armed men fell on their knees and assured Ambrose that they came to pray and not to fight.† Ambrose ascended the pulpit; his sermon was on the Book of Job; he enlarged on the conduct of the wife of the patriarch, who commanded him to blaspheme God; he compared the Empress with this example of impiety; he went on to compare her with Eve, with Jezebel, with Herodias. "The Emperor demands a church — what

* Referebam in meo jure esse, ut non excitarem, in Dei manu, uti mitigaret.

† It would be curious if we could ascertain the different constitution of the troops employed in the irreverent scenes in the churches of Alexandria and Constantinople, and here at Milan. Were the one raised from the vicious population of the Eastern cities, the other partly composed of barbarians? How much is justly to be attributed to the character of the prelate?

has the Emperor to do with the adulteress, the church of the heretics?" Intelligence arrived that the populace were tearing down the hangings of the church, on which was the sacred image of the sovereign, and which had been suspended in the Porcian Basilica, as a sign that the church had been taken into the possession of the Emperor. Ambrose sent some of his priests to allay the tumult, but went not himself. He looked triumphantly around on his armed devotees: "The Gentiles have entered into the inheritance of the Lord, but the armed Gentiles have become Christians, and coheirs of God. My enemies are now my defenders."

A confidential secretary of the Emperor appeared, not to expel or degrade the refractory prelate, but to deprecate his *tyranny*. "Why do ye hesitate to strike down *the tyrant*," replied Ambrose, "my only defence is in my power of exposing my life for the honour of God." He proceeded with proud humility, "Under the ancient law, priests have bestowed, they have not condescended to assume empire; kings have desired the priesthood, rather than priests the royal power." He appealed to his influence over Maximus, which had averted the invasion of Italy. The imperial authority quailed before the resolute prelate; the soldiers were withdrawn, the prisoners released, and the fines annulled.* When the Emperor himself was urged to confront Ambrose in the church, the timid or

The Emperor yields to Ambrose.

* Certatim hoc nuntiare milites, irruentes in altaria, osculis significare pacis insigne. Ambrose perceived that God had stricken Lucifer, the great Dragon (vermem antelucanum).

prudent youth replied, "His eloquence would compel yourselves to lay me bound hand and foot before his throne." To such a height had the sacerdotal power attained in the West, when wielded by a man of the energy and determination of Ambrose.*

But the pertinacious animosity of the Empress was not yet exhausted. A law was passed authorising the assemblies of the Arians. A second struggle took place; a new triumph for Ambrose; a new defeat for the Imperial power. From his inviolable citadel, his church, Ambrose uttered in courageous security his defiance. An emphatic sentence expressed the prelate's notion of the relation of the civil and religious power, and proclaimed the subordination of the Emperor within the mysterious circle of sacerdotal authority—"The Emperor is of the church, and in the church, but not above the church."

Was it to be supposed that the remonstrances of expiring Paganism would make any impression upon a court thus under subjection to one, who, by exercising the office of protector in the time of peril, assumed the right to dictate on subjects which appeared more completely within his sphere of jurisdiction? If Arianism in the person of the

* Ambrose relates that one of the officers of the court, more daring than the rest, presumed to resent this outrage, as he considered it, on the Emperor. "While I live, dost thou thus treat Valentinian with contempt? I will strike off thy head." Ambrose replied, "God grant that thou mayest fulfil thy menace. I shall suffer the fate of a bishop; thou wilt do the act of an eunuch" (tu facies, quod spadones).

Empress was compelled to bow, Paganism could scarcely hope to obtain even a patient hearing.

We have already related the contest between expiring Polytheism and ascendant Christianity in the persons of Symmachus and of Ambrose. The more polished periods and the gentle dignity of Symmachus might delight the old aristocracy of Rome. But the full flow of the more vehement eloquence of Ambrose, falling into the current of popular opinion at Milan, swept all before it.* By this time the Old Testament language and sentiment with regard to idolatry were completely incorporated with the Christian feeling; and when Ambrose enforced on a Christian Emperor the sacred duty of intolerance against opinions and practices, which scarcely a century before had been the established religion of the Empire, his zeal was supported almost by the unanimous applause of the Christian world.

Ambrose did not rely on his eloquence alone, or on the awfulness of his sacerdotal character, to control the public mind. The champion of the

* The most curious fact relating to Ambrose, is the extraordinary contrast between his vigorous, practical, and statesmanlike character as a man, as well as that of such among his writings, as may be called public and popular, and the mystic subtlety which fills most of his theological works. He treats the Scripture as one vast allegory, and propounds his own fanciful interpretation, or corollaries, with as much authority as if they were the plain sense of the sacred writer. No retired schoolman follows out the fantastic analogies and recondite significations which he perceives in almost every word, with the vain ingenuity of Ambrose: every word or number reminds him of every other place in the Scripture in which the same word or number occurs; and stringing them together with this loose connection, he works out some latent mystic signification, which he would suppose to have been within the intention of the inspired writer. See particularly the Hexaemeron.

BOOK III.

Church was invested by popular belief, perhaps by his own ardent faith, with miraculous power, and the high state of religious excitement was maintained in Milan by the increasing dignity and splendour of the ceremonial, and by the pompous installation of the relics of saints within the principal church.

It cannot escape the observation of a calm inquirer into the history of man, or be disguised by an admirer of a rational, pious, and instructive Christian ministry, that whenever, from this period, the clergy possessed a full and dominant power, the claim to supernatural power is more frequently and ostentatiously made, while where they possess a less complete ascendancy, miracles cease. While Ambrose was at least availing himself of, if not encouraging, this religious credulity, Chrysostom, partly, no doubt, from his own good sense, partly from respect for the colder and more inquisitive character of his audience, not merely distinctly disavows miraculous powers in his own person, but asserts that long ago they had come to an end.* But in Milan the archbishop asserts his own belief in,

* Διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ μὲν τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ ἀναξίοις χαρίσματα ἐδίδοτο· χρείαν γὰρ εἶχε τὸ παλαιὸν, τῆς πίστεως ἕνεκα, ταύτης τῆς βοηθείας· νῦν δὲ οὐδὲ ἀξίοις δίδοται. In Act. vol. iii. 65. Μὴ τοίνυν τὸ μὴ γένεσθαι νῦν σημεῖα, τεκμήριον ποιοῦ τοῦ μὴ γεγενῆσθαι τοτε, καὶ γὰρ δὴ τότε χρησίμως ἐγίνετο, καὶ νῦν χρησίμως οὐ γίνεται. See the whole passage in Cor. Hom. vi. xi. 45. On Psalm cx., indeed, vol. v. p. 271., he seems to assert the continuance of miracles, particularly during the reign of Julian and of Maximin. But he gives the death of Julian as one of those miracles. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ διὰ τοῦτο, καὶ δι' ἕτερον τὰ σημεῖα ἔπαυσεν ὁ Θεός, in Matt. vii. 375. Compare also vol. i. p. 411. xi. 397. in Coloss. on Psalm cxlii. vol. v. p. 455. Middleton has dwelt at length on this subject. Works, vol. i. p. 103.

Augustine denies the continuance of miracles with equal distinctness. Cum enim Ecclesia Catholica per totum orbem diffusa atque fundata sit, nec miracula illa

and the eager enthusiasm of the people did not hesitate to embrace as unquestionable truth, the public display of preternatural power in the streets of the city. A dream revealed to the pious prelate the spot, where rested the relics of the martyrs, St. Gervaise and Protadius. As they approached the spot, a man possessed by a demon was seized with a paroxysm, which betrayed his trembling consciousness of the presence of the holy remains. The bones of two men of great stature were found, with much blood.* The bodies were disinterred, and conveyed in solemn pomp to the Ambrosian Church. They were reinterred under the altar; they became the tutelary Saints of the spot.† A blind butcher, named Severus, recovered his eyesight by the application of a handkerchief, which had touched the relics, and this was but one of many wonders which were universally supposed to have been

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in nostra tempora durare permissa sunt, ne animus semper visibilia quæreret, et eorum consuetudine frigesceret genus humanum, quorum novitate flagravit. De Verâ Relig. c. 47. Oper. i. 765. Yet Fleury appeals, and not without ground, to the repeated testimony of St. Augustine, as eye-witness of this miracle; and the reader of St. Augustine's works, even his noblest (see lib. xx. c. 8.), the City of God, cannot but call to mind perpetual instances of miraculous occurrences related with unhesitating faith. It is singular how often we hear at one time the strong intellect of Augustine, at another the age of Augustine, speaking in his works.

* The Arians denied this miracle, Ambrose, Epist. xxii. Invenimus miræ magnitudinis viros duos, ut *prisca ætas ferebat.* Did Ambrose suppose that the race of men had degenerated in the last two or three centuries? or that the heroes of the faith had been gifted with heroic stature? The sermon of Ambrose is a strange rhapsody, which would only suit an highly excited audience. He acknowledges that these martyrs were unknown, and that the church of Milan was before barren of relics.

† "Succedunt victimæ triumphales in locum ubi Christus natus est; sed ille super altare qui pro omnibus passus est; isti sub altari qui illius reveriti sunt passionem;" but Ambrose calls them the guardians and defenders of the Church.

BOOK III.

wrought by the smallest article of dress, which had imbibed the miraculous virtue of these sacred bones.

The awe-struck mind was never permitted to repose; more legitimate means were employed to maintain the ardent belief, thus enforced upon the multitude. The whole ceremonial of the church was conducted by Ambrose with unrivalled solemnity and magnificence. Music was cultivated with the utmost care; some of the noblest hymns of the Latin Church are attributed to Ambrose himself, and the Ambrosian service for a long period distinguished the Church of Milan by the grave dignity and simple fullness of its harmony.*

But the sacerdotal dignity of Ambrose might command a feeble boy: he had now to confront the imperial majesty in the person of one of the greatest men who had ever worn the Roman purple. Even in the midst of his irreconcilable feud with the heretical Empress, Ambrose had been again entreated to spread the shield of his protection over the youthful Emperor. He had undertaken a second embassy to the usurper Maximus. Maximus, as if he feared the awful influence of Ambrose over his mind, refused to admit the priestly ambassador, except to a public audience. Ambrose was considered as condescending from his dignity, in approaching the throne of the Emperor. The usurper reproached him for his former interference, by which he had been arrested in his invasion of Italy, and had lost the opportunity of becoming master of the unresisting province. Ambrose answered with

Second embassy to Maximus.

* This subject will recur at a later part of this volume.

pardonable pride, that he accepted the honourable accusation of having saved the orphan Emperor. He then arrayed himself, as it were, in his priestly inviolability, reproached Maximus with the murder of Gratian, and demanded his remains. He again refused all spiritual communion with one guilty of innocent blood, for which as yet he had submitted to no ecclesiastical penance. Maximus, as might have been expected, drove from his court the daring prelate, who had thus stretched to the utmost the sanctity of person attributed to an ambassador and a bishop. Ambrose, however, returned not merely safe, but without insult or outrage, to his Italian diocese.*

Accession of Theodosius. A. D. 388.

The arms of Theodosius decided the contest, and secured the trembling throne of Valentinian the younger. But the accession of Theodosius, instead of obscuring the rival pretensions of the Church to power and influence, seemed to confirm and strengthen them. That such a mind as that of Theodosius should submit with humility to ecclesiastical remonstrance and discipline tended no doubt, beyond all other events, to overawe mankind. Everywhere else throughout the Roman world, the state, and even the Church, bowed at the feet of Theodosius; in Milan alone, in the height of his power, he was confronted and subdued by the more commanding mind and religious majesty of Ambrose. His justice as well as his dignity quailed beneath the ascendancy of the prelate. A synagogue of the Jews at Callinicum, in

* Epist. xxiv.

BOOK III.

Jewish synagogue destroyed.

Osroene, had been burned by the Christians, it was said, at the instigation, if not under the actual sanction, of the Bishop. The church of the Valentinian Gnostics had likewise been destroyed and plundered by the zeal of some monks. Theodosius commanded the restoration of the synagogue at the expense of the Christians, and a fair compensation to the heretical Valentinians for their losses.

Conduct of Ambrose.

The pious indignation of Ambrose was not restrained either by the remoteness of these transactions from the scene of his own labours, or by the undeniable violence of the Christian party. He stood forward, designated, it might seem, by his situation and character, as the acknowledged champion of the whole of Christianity; the sacerdotal power was embodied in his person. In a letter to the Emperor, he boldly vindicated the Bishop; he declared himself, as far as his approbation could make him so, an accomplice in the glorious and holy crime. If martyrdom was the consequence, he claimed the honour of that martyrdom; he declared it to be utterly irreconcilable with Christianity, that it should in any way contribute to the restoration of Jewish or heretical worship.* If the Bishop should comply with the

* Hac propositâ conditione, puto dicturum episcopum, quòd ipse ignes sparserit, turbas compulerit, populos concluserit, ne amittat occasionem martyrii, ut pro invalidis subjiciat validiorem. O beatum mendacium quo adquiritur sibi aliorum absolutio, sui gratia. Hoc est, Imperator, quod poposci et ego, ut in me magis vindicares, et hoc si crimen putares mihi adscriberes. Quid mandas in absentes judicium? Habes præsentem, habes confitentem reum. Proclamo, quod ego synagogam incenderim, certè quod ego illis mandaverim, ne esset locus, in quo Christus negaretur. Si objiciatur mihi, cur hic non incenderim? Divino jam cœpit cremari judicio; meum cessavit opus. Epist. xxiv. p. 561.

mandate, he would be an apostate, and the Emperor would be answerable for his apostasy. This act was but a slight and insufficient retaliation for the deeds of plunder and destruction perpetrated by the Jews and heretics against orthodox Christians. The letter of Ambrose did not produce the desired effect; but the bishop renewed his address in public in the church, and at length extorted from the Emperor the impunity of the offenders. Then, and not till then, he condescended to approach the altar, and to proceed with the service of God.

Ambrose felt his strength; he feared not to assert that superiority of the altar over the throne which was a fundamental maxim of his Christianity. There is no reason to ascribe to ostentation, or to sacerdotal ambition, rather than to the profound conviction of his mind, the dignity which he vindicated for the priesthood, the authority supreme and without appeal in all things which related to the ceremonial of religion. Theodosius endured, and the people applauded, his public exclusion of the Emperor from within the impassable rails, which fenced off the officiating priesthood from the profane laity. An exemption had usually been made for the sacred person of the Emperor, and, according to this usage, Theodosius ventured within the forbidden precincts. Ambrose, with lofty courtesy, pointed to the seat or throne reserved for the Emperor, at the head of the laity. Theodosius submitted to the rebuke, and withdrew to the lowlier station.

BOOK III.

But if these acts of Ambrose might to some appear unwise or unwarrantable aggressions on the dignity of the civil magistrate; or if to the prophetic sagacity of others they might foreshow the growth of an enormous and irresponsible authority, and awaken well-grounded apprehension or jealousy, the Roman world could not withhold its admiration from another act of the Milanese prelate: it could not but hail the appearance of a new moral power, enlisted on the side of humanity and justice; a power which could bow the loftiest, as well as the meanest, under its dominion. For the first time since the establishment of the imperial despotism, the voice of a subject was heard in deliberate, public, and authoritative condemnation of a deed of atrocious tyranny, and sanguinary vengeance; for the first time, an Emperor of Rome trembled before public opinion, and humbled himself to a contrite confession of guilt and cruelty.

Massacre of Thessalonica. A. D. 390.

With all his wisdom and virtue, Theodosius was liable to paroxysms of furious and ungovernable anger. A dispute had arisen in Thessalonica about a favourite charioteer in the circus; out of the dispute, a sedition, in which some lives were lost. The imperial officers, who interfered to suppress the fray, were wounded or slain, and Botheric, the representative of the Emperor, treated with indignity. Notwithstanding every attempt on the part of the clergy to allay the furious resentment of Theodosius, the counsels of the more violent advisers prevailed. Secret orders were issued; the circus, filled with the whole population of the city,

was surrounded by troops, and a general and indiscriminate massacre of all ages and sexes, the guilty and the innocent, revenged the insult on the imperial dignity. Seven thousand lives were sacrificed in this remorseless carnage.

On the first intelligence of this atrocity, Ambrose, with prudent self-command, kept aloof from the exasperated Emperor. He retired into the country, and a letter from his own hand was delivered to the sovereign. The letter expressed the horror of Ambrose and his brother bishops at this inhuman deed, in which he should consider himself an accomplice if he could refrain from expressing his detestation of its guilt; if he should not refuse to communicate with a man stained with the innocent blood, not of one, but of thousands. He exhorts him to penitence; he promises his prayers in his behalf. He acted up to his declaration; the Emperor of the world found the doors of the church closed against him. For eight months he endured this ignominious exclusion. Even on the sacred day of the Nativity, he implored in vain to be admitted within those precincts which were open to the slave and to the beggar; those precincts which were the vestibule to heaven, for through the church alone was heaven to be approached. Submission and remonstrance were alike in vain; to an urgent minister of the sovereign, Ambrose calmly replied, that the Emperor might kill him, and pass over his body into the sanctuary.

At length Ambrose consented to admit the Emperor to an audience; with difficulty he was

BOOK III.

persuaded to permit him to enter, not into the church itself, but into the outer porch, the place of the public penitents. At length the interdict was removed on two conditions; that the Emperor should issue an edict prohibiting the execution of capital punishments for thirty days after conviction, and that he should submit to public penance. Stripped of his imperial ornaments, prostrate on the pavement, beating his breast, tearing his hair, watering the ground with his tears, the master of the Roman empire, the conqueror in so many victories, the legislator of the world, at length received the hard wrung absolution.

This was the culminating point of pure Christian influence. Christianity appeared before the world as the champion and vindicator of outraged humanity; as having founded a tribunal of justice, which extended its protective authority over the meanest, and suspended its retributive penalties over the mightiest of mankind.

First capital punishment for religion. A. D. 385.

Nearly at the same time (about four years before) had been revealed the latent danger from this new unlimited sovereignty over the human mind. *The first blood was judicially shed for religious opinion.* Far however from apprehending the fatal consequences which might arise out of their own exclusive and intolerant sentiments, or foreseeing that the sacerdotal authority, which they fondly and sincerely supposed they were strengthening for the unalloyed welfare of mankind, would seize and wield the sword of persecution with such remorseless and unscrupulous severity, this first fatal libation of Christian blood, which was the act of an

CHAP. X.

usurping Emperor, and a few foreign bishops, was solemnly disclaimed by all the more influential dignitaries of the Western Church. Priscillian, a noble and eloquent Spaniard, had embraced some Manichean or rather Gnostic opinions. The same contradictory accusations of the severest asceticism and of licentious habits, which were so perpetually adduced against the Manicheans, formed the chief charge against Priscillian and his followers. The leaders of the sect had taken refuge, from the persecutions of their countrymen, in Gaul, and propagated their opinions to some extent in Aquitaine. They were pursued with unwearied animosity by the Spanish Bishops Ithacius and Idacius. Maximus, the usurping Emperor of Gaul, who then resided at Treves, took cognisance of the case. In vain the celebrated Martin of Tours, whose life was almost an unwearied campaign against idolatry, and whose unrelenting hand had demolished every religious edifice within his reach; a prelate whose dread of heresy was almost as sensitive as of Paganism, urged his protest against these proceedings with all the vehemence of his character. During his absence, a capital sentence was extorted from the Emperor; Priscillian and some of his followers were put to death by the civil authority for the crime of religious error. The fatal precedent was disowned by the general voice of Christianity. It required another considerable period of ignorance and bigotry to deaden the fine moral sense of Christianity to the total abandonment of its spirit of love. When Ambrose reproached the usurper

Priscillian and his followers.

Martin of Tours.

Conduct of Ambrose.

BOOK III.

with the murder of his sovereign, Gratian, he reminded him likewise of the unjust execution of the Priscillianists; he refused to communicate with the bishops who had any concern in that sanguinary and unchristian transaction.*

A. D. 392. Death of Valentinian. A. D. 393.

Ambrose witnessed and lamented the death of the young Valentinian, over whom he pronounced a funeral oration. On the usurpation of the Pagan Eugenius, he fled from Milan, but returned to behold and to applaud the triumph of Theodosius. The conquering Emperor gave a new proof of his homage to Christianity and to its representative. Under the influence of Ambrose, he refrained for a time from communicating in the Christian mysteries, because his hands were stained with blood, though that blood had been shed in a just and necessary war.† To Ambrose the dying Emperor commended his sons, and the Bishop of Milan pronounced the funeral oration over the last great Emperor of the world.

Death of Theodosius. A. D. 395.

Death of Ambrose. A. D. 397.

He did not long survive his imperial friend. It is related that, when Ambrose was on his deathbed, Stilicho, apprehending the loss of such a man to Italy and to Christendom, urged the principal inhabitants of Milan to entreat the effective prayers of the bishop for his own recovery. "I have not so lived among you," replied Ambrose, "as to be ashamed to live; I have so good a Master, that I am not afraid to die." Ambrose expired in the attitude and in the act of prayer.

* Ambros. Epist. xxiv. The whole transaction in Sulpicius Sever. E. H. and Life of St. Martin.

† Oratio de Obitu Theodos. 34.

CHAP. X.

While Ambrose was thus assuming an unprecedented supremacy over his own age, and deepening and strengthening the foundation of the ecclesiastical power, Augustine was beginning gradually to consummate that total change in human opinion which was to influence the Christianity of the remotest ages.

Augustine.

Of all Christian writers since the Apostles, Augustine has maintained the most permanent and extensive influence. That influence, indeed, was unfelt, or scarcely felt, in the East; but as the East gradually became more estranged, till it was little more than a blank in Christian history, the dominion of Augustine over the opinions of the Western world was eventually over the whole of Christendom. Basil and Chrysostom spoke a language foreign or dead to the greater part of the Christian world. The Greek empire, after the reign of Justinian, gradually contracting its limits and sinking into abject superstition, forgot its own great writers on the more momentous subjects of religion and morality, for new controversialists on frivolous and insignificant points of difference. The more important feuds, as of Nestorianism, made little progress in the West; the West repudiated almost with one voice the iconoclastic opinions; and at length Mohammedanism swept away its fairest provinces, and limited the Greek church to a still narrowing circle. The Latin language thus became almost that of Christianity; Latin writers the sole authority to which men appealed, or from which they imperceptibly imbibed the tone of

BOOK III.

religious doctrine or sentiment. Of these, Augustine was the most universal, the most commanding, the most influential.

The earliest Christian writers had not been able or willing altogether to decline some of the more obvious and prominent points of the Augustinian theology; but in his works they were first wrought up into a regular system. Abstruse topics, which had been but slightly touched, or dimly hinted in the Apostolic writings, and of which the older creeds had been entirely silent, became the prominent and unavoidable tenets of Christian doctrine. Augustinianism has constantly revived, in all its strongest and most peremptory statements, in every period of religious excitement. In later days, it formed much of the doctrinal system of Luther; it was worked up into a still more rigid and uncompromising system by the severe intellect of Calvin; it was remoulded into the Roman Catholic doctrine by Jansenius; the popular theology of most of the Protestant sects is but a modified Augustinianism.

Augustinian theology.

Christianity had now accomplished its divine mission, so far as impregnating the Roman world with its first principles, the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, and future retribution. These vital questions between the old Paganism and the new religion had been decided by their almost general adoption into the common sentiments of mankind. And now questions naturally and necessarily arising out of the providential government of that Supreme Deity, out of that conscious immortality, and out of that acknowledged retribution,

had begun profoundly to agitate the human heart. The nature of man had been stirred in its inmost depths. The hopes and fears, now centered on another state of being, were ever restlessly hovering over the abyss into which they were forced to gaze. As men were not merely convinced, but deeply penetrated, with the belief that they had souls to be saved, the means, the process, the degree of attainable assurance concerning salvation, became subjects of anxious inquiry. Every kind of information on these momentous topics was demanded with importunity, and hailed with eagerness. With the ancient philosophy, the moral condition of man was a much simpler and calmer subject of consideration. It could coldly analyse every emotion, trace the workings of every passion, and present its results; if in eloquent language, kindling the mind of the hearer, rather by that language, than by the excitement of the inquiry. It was the attractive form of the philosophy, the adventitious emotion produced by bold paradox, happy invention, acute dialectics, which amused and partially enlightened the inquisitive mind. But now mingled up with religion, every sensation, every feeling, every propensity, every thought, had become not merely a symptom of the moral condition, but an element in that state of spiritual advancement or deterioration which was to be weighed and examined in the day of judgment. The ultimate and avowed object of philosophy, the *summum bonum*, the greatest attainable happiness, shrunk into an unimportant consideration. These

BOOK III.

were questions of spiritual life and death, and the solution was therefore embraced rather by the will and the passions, than by the cool and sober reason. The solution of these difficulties was the more acceptable in proportion as it was peremptory and dogmatic; any thing could be endured rather than uncertainty, and Augustine himself was, doubtless, urged more by the desire of peace to his own anxious spirit than by the ambition of dictating to Christianity on these abstruse topics. The influence of Augustine thus concentered the Christian mind on subjects to which Christianity led, but did not answer with fulness or precision. The Gospels and Apostolic writings paused within the border of attainable human knowledge; Augustine fearlessly rushed forward, or was driven by his antagonists; and partly from the reasonings of a new religious philosophy, partly by general inferences from limited and particular phrases in the sacred writings, framed a complete, it must be acknowledged, and as far as its own consistency, an harmonious system; but of which it was the inevitable tendency to give an overpowering importance to problems on which Christianity, wisely measuring, it should seem, the capacity of the human mind, had declined to utter any final or authoritative decrees. Almost up to this period in Christian history*, on these mysterious topics, all was unquestioned and undefined; and though they could not but cross the path of Christian reasoning,

* In the Historia Pelagiana of Vossius may be found quotations expressive of the sentiments of the earlier Fathers on many of these points.

—could not but be incidentally noticed, they had, as yet, undergone no full or direct investigation. Nothing but the calmest and firmest philosophy could have avoided or eluded these points, on which, though the human mind could not attain to knowledge, it was impatient of ignorance. The immediate or more remote, the direct or indirect, the sensible or the imperceptible, influence of the divine agency (grace) on the human soul, with the inseparable consequences of necessity and free-will, thus became the absorbing and agitating points of Christian doctrine. From many causes, these inevitable questions had forced themselves, at this period, on the general attention; Manicheism on one hand, Pelagianism on the other, stirred up their darkest depths. The Christian mind demanded on all these topics at once excitement and rest. Nothing could be more acceptable than the unhesitating and peremptory decisions of Augustine; and his profound piety ministered perpetual emotion; his glowing and perspicuous language, his confident dogmatism, and the apparent completeness of his system, offered repose.

But the primary principle of the Augustinian theology was already deeply rooted in the awe-struck piety of the Christian world. In this state of the general mind, that which brought the Deity more directly and more perpetually in contact with the soul, at once enlisted all minds which were under the shadow of religious fears, or softened by any milder religious feeling. It was not a remote supremacy, a government through unseen and

BOOK III.

untraceable influences, a general reverential trust in the divine protection, which gave satisfaction to the agitated spirit; but an actually felt and immediate presence, operating on each particular and most minute part of the creation; not a regular and unvarying emanation of the divine will, but a special and peculiar intervention in each separate case. The whole course of human events, and the moral condition of each individual, were alike under the acknowledged, or conscious and direct, operation of the Deity. But the more distinct and unquestioned this principle, the more the problem which in a different form had agitated the Eastern world, — the origin of evil, — forced itself on the consideration. There it had taken a kind of speculative or theogonical turn, and allied itself with physical notions; here it became a moral and practical, and almost every-day question, involving the prescience of God and the freedom of the human soul. Augustine had rejected Manicheism; the antagonist and equally conflicting powers of that system had offended his high conception of the supremacy of God. Still his earlier Manicheism lent an unconscious colouring to his maturer opinions. In another form, he divided the world into regions of cloudless light and total darkness. But he did not mingle the Deity in any way in the darkness which enveloped the whole of mankind, a chosen portion of which alone were rescued, by the gracious intervention of the Redeemer and the Holy Spirit. The rest were separated by an insuperable barrier, that of hereditary evil; they bore within, the fatal

and inevitable proscription. Within the pale of Election was the world of Light, without, the world of Perdition; and the human soul was so reduced to a subordinate agent before the mysterious and inscrutable power, which, by the infusion of faith, rescued it from its inveterate hereditary propensity, as to become entirely passive, altogether annihilated, in overleaping the profound though narrow gulph, which divided the two kingdoms of Grace and of Perdition.

Thus that system which assigned the most unbounded and universal influence to the Deity was seized upon by devout piety as the truth which it would be an impious limitation of Omnipotence to question. Man offered his free agency on the altar of his religion, and forgot that he thereby degraded the most wonderful work of Omnipotence, a being endowed with free agency. While the internal consciousness was not received as sufficient evidence of the freedom of the will, it was considered as unquestionable testimony to the operations of divine grace.

At all events, these questions now became unavoidable articles of the Christian faith; from this time the simpler Apostolic Creed, and the splendid amplifications of the divine attributes of the Trinity, were enlarged, if not by stern definitions, by dictatorial axioms on original sin, on grace, predestination, the total depravity of mankind, election to everlasting life, and final reprobation. To the appellations which awoke what was considered righteous and legitimate hatred in all true believers,

BOOK III.

Arianism and Manicheism, was now added as a term of equal obloquy, — Pelagianism.*

* The doctrines of Pelagius have been represented as arising out of the monastic spirit, or at least out of one form of its influence. The high ideal of moral perfection which the monk set before himself, the conscious strength of will which was necessary to aspire to that height, the proud impatience and disdain of the ordinary excuse for infirmity, the inherited weakness and depravity of human nature, induced the colder and more severe Pelagius to embrace his peculiar tenets ; the rejection of original sin ; the assertion of the entire freedom of the will; the denial or limitation of the influence of divine grace. Of the personal history of Pelagius little is known, except that he was a British or French monk (his name is said, in one tradition, to have been Morgan), but neither he nor his colleague Cælestius appears to have been a secluded ascetic; they dwelt in Rome for some time, where they propagated their doctrines. Of his character perhaps still less is known, unless from his tenets, and some fragments of his writings, preserved by his adversaries; excepting that the blamelessness of his manners is admitted by his adversaries (the term egregiè Christianus is the expression of St. Augustine) : and even the violent Jerome bears testimony to his innocence of life.

But the tenets of Augustine appear to flow more directly from the monastic system. His doctrines (in his controversy with Pelagius, for in his other writings he holds another tone) are tinged with the Encratite or Manichean notion, that there was a *physical* transmission of sin in the propagation of children, even in lawful marriage. (See, among other writers, Jer. Taylor's Vindication of his Deus Justificatus.) Even this concupiscentia carnis peccatum est, quia inest illi inobedientia contra dominatum mentis. De Pecc. Remis. i. 3. This is the old doctrine of the inherent evil of matter. We are astonished that Augustine, who had been a father, and a fond father, though of an illegitimate son, could be driven by the stern logic of polemics to the damnation of unbaptized infants, a *milder* damnation, it is true, to eternal fire. This was the more genuine doctrine of men in whose hearts all the sweet charities of life had been long seared up by monastic discipline; men like Fulgentius, to whose name the title of saint is prefixed, and who lays down this benignant and Christian axiom: "Firmissimè tene et nullatenus dubites, parvulos, sive in uteris matrum vivere incipiunt, et ibi moriuntur, sive cum de matribus nati, sine sacramento sancto baptismatis de hoc seculo transeunt, *ignis æterni sempiterno supplicio puniendos.*" Fulgentius de Fide, quoted in Vossius, Hist. Pelag. p. 257.

The assertion of the entire freedom of the will, and the restricted sense in which Pelagius appears to have received the doctrine of divine grace, confining it to the influences of the divine revelation, appear to arise out of philosophical reasonings, rather than out of the monastic spirit. The severe monastic discipline was more likely to infuse the sense of the slavery of the will; and the brooding over bodily and mental emotions, the general cause and result of the monastic spirit,

CHAP. X.

Augustine, by the extraordinary adaptation of his genius to his own age, the comprehensive grandeur of his views, the intense earnestness of his character, his inexhaustible activity, the vigour, warmth, and perspicuity of his style, had a right to command the homage of Western Christendom. He was at once the first universal, and the purest and most powerful of the Latin Christian writers. It is singular that almost all the earlier Christian authors in the West were provincials, chiefly of Africa. But the works of Tertullian were, in general, brief treatises on temporary subjects of controversy; if enlivened by the natural vehemence and strength of the man, disfigured by the worst barbarisms of style. The writings of Cyprian were chiefly short epistles or treatises on subjects of immediate or local interest. Augustine retained the fervour and energy of the African style with much purer and more perspicuous Latinity. His ardent imagination was tempered by reasoning powers which boldly grappled with every subject. He possessed and was unembarrassed by the possession of all the knowledge which had been accumulated in the Roman world. He commanded the whole range of Latin literature, and perhaps his influence over his own hemisphere was not

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would tend to exaggerate rather than to question or limit the actual, and even sensible workings of the divine spirit within the soul. The calmer temperament, indeed, and probably more peaceful religious developement of Pelagius, may have disposed him to his system; as the more vehement character, and agitated religious life of Augustine, to his vindication, founded on his internal experience of the constant divine agency upon the heart and the soul.

BOOK III.

diminished by his ignorance, or at best imperfect and late-acquired acquaintance with Greek.* But all his knowledge and all his acquirements fell into the train of his absorbing religious sentiments or passions. On the subjects with which he was conversant, a calm and dispassionate philosophy would have been indignantly repudiated by the Christian mind, and Augustine's temperament was too much in harmony with that of the time to offend by deficiency in fervour. It was profound religious agitation, not cold and abstract truth, which the age required; the emotions of piety, rather than the convictions of severe logical inquiry; and in Augustine, the depth or abstruseness of the matter never extinguished or allayed the passion, or in one sense, the popularity, of his style. At different periods of his life, Augustine aspired to and succeeded in enthralling all the various powers and faculties of the human mind. That life was the type of his theology; and as it passed through its various changes of age, of circumstance, and of opinion, it left its own impressions strongly and permanently stamped upon the whole Latin Christianity. The gentleness of his childhood, the passions of his youth, the studies of his adolescence, the wilder dreams of his immature Christianity, the Manicheism, the intermediate stage of Platonism, through which he passed into orthodoxy, the fervour with which he embraced, the vigour with which he developed, the unhesitating confidence

* On St. Augustine's knowledge of Greek, compare Tillemont, in his Life, p. 7. Punic was still spoken by the common people in the neighbourhood of Carthage.

CHAP. X.

with which he enforced his final creed — all affected more or less the general mind. His Confessions became the manual of all those who were forced by their temperament or inclined by their disposition to brood over the inward sensations of their own minds; to trace within themselves all the trepidations, the misgivings, the agonies, the exultations, of the religious conscience; the gradual formation of opinions till they harden into dogmas, or warm into objects of ardent passion. Since Augustine, this internal autobiography of the soul has always had the deepest interest for those of strong religious convictions; it was what multitudes had felt, but no one had yet embodied in words; it was the appalling yet attractive manner in which men beheld all the conflicts and adventures of their own spiritual life reflected with bold and speaking truth. Men shrunk from the divine and unapproachable image of Christian perfection in the life of the Redeemer, to the more earthly, more familiar picture of the development of the Christian character, crossed with the light and shade of human weakness and human passion.

The religious was more eventful than the civil life of St. Augustine. He was born A. D. 354, in Tagasta, an episcopal city of Numidia. His parents were Christians of respectable rank. In his childhood, he was attacked by a dangerous illness; he entreated to be baptized; his mother Monica took the alarm; all was prepared for that solemn ceremony; but on his recovery, it was deferred, and Augustine remained for some years in the

BOOK III. A. D. 371.

humbler rank of catechumen. He received the best education, in grammar and rhetoric, which the neighbouring city of Madaura could afford. At seventeen, he was sent to Carthage to finish his studies. Augustine has, perhaps, highly coloured both the idleness of his period of study in Madaura, and the licentious habits to which he abandoned himself in the dissolute city of Carthage. His ardent mind plunged into the intoxicating enjoyments of the theatre, and his excited passions demanded every kind of gratification. He had a natural son, called by the somewhat inappropriate name A-deo-datus. He was first arrested in his sensual course, not by the solemn voice of religion, but by the gentler remonstrances of Pagan literature. He learned from Cicero, not from the Gospel, the higher dignity of intellectual attainments. From his brilliant success in his studies, it is clear that his life, if yielding at times to the temptations of youth, was not a course of indolence or total abandonment to pleasure. It was the Hortensius of Cicero which awoke his mind to nobler aspirations, and the contempt of worldly enjoyments.

But philosophy could not satisfy the lofty desires which it had awakened: he panted for some better hopes, and more satisfactory objects of study. He turned to the religion of his parents, but his mind was not subdued to a feeling for the inimitable beauty of the New Testament. Its simplicity of style appeared rude, after the stately march of ully's eloquence. But Manicheism seized at once upon his kindled imagination. For nine years,

CHAP. X.

from the age of nineteen to twenty-eight, the mind of Augustine wandered among the vague and fantastic reveries of Oriental theology. The virtuous and holy Monica, with the anxious apprehensions and prescient hopes of a mother's heart, watched over the irregular development of his powerful mind. Her distress at his Manichean errors was consoled by an aged bishop, who had himself been involved in the same opinions. "Be of good cheer, the child of so many tears cannot perish." The step against which she remonstrated most strongly, led to that result which she scarcely dared to hope. Augustine grew discontented with the wild Manichean doctrines, which neither satisfied the religious yearnings of his heart, nor the philosophical demands of his understanding. He was in danger of falling into a desperate Pyrrhonism, or at best the proud indifference of an Academic. He determined to seek a more distinguished sphere for his talents as a teacher of rhetoric; and, notwithstanding his mother's tears, he left Carthage for Rome. The fame of his talents obtained him an invitation to teach at Milan. He was there within the magic circle of the great ecclesiastic of the West. But we cannot pause to trace the throes and pangs of his final conversion. The writings of St. Paul accomplished what the eloquence of Ambrose had begun. In one of the paroxysms of his religious agony, he seemed to hear a voice from heaven,—"Take and read, take and read." Till now he had rejected the writings of the Apostle; he opened on the passage which contains the awful denunciations of Paul against

A. D. 383. Ætat. 29.

A. D. 385.

BOOK III.

the dissolute morals of the Heathen. The conscience of Augustine recognised "in the chambering and wantonness" the fearful picture of his own life; for though he had abandoned the looser indulgences of his youth (he had lived in strict fidelity, not to a lawful wife indeed, but to a concubine) even his mother was anxious to disengage him, by an honourable marriage, from the bonds of a less legitimate connection. But he burst at once his thraldom; shook his old nature from his heart; renounced for ever all, even lawful indulgences, of the carnal desires; forswore the world, and withdrew himself, though without exciting any unnecessary astonishment among his hearers, from his profaner function as teacher of rhetoric. His mother, who had followed him to Milan, lived to witness his baptism as a Catholic Christian, by the hands of Ambrose; and in all the serene happiness of her accomplished hopes and prayers, expired in his arms before his return to Africa. His son, Adeodatus, who died a few years afterwards, was baptized at the same time.

Baptism of Augustine. A. D. 387.

To return to the writings of St. Augustine, or rather to his life in his writings. In his controversial treatises against the Manicheans and against Pelagius, Augustine had the power of seemingly at least, bringing down those abstruse subjects to popular comprehension. His vehement and intrepid dogmatism hurried along the unresisting mind, which was allowed no pause for the sober examination of difficulties, or was awed into acquiescence by the still suspended charge of impiety. The imagination was at the same time

Controversial writings

kept awake by a rich vein of allegoric interpretation, dictated by the same bold decision, and enforced as necessary conclusions from the sacred writings, or latent truths intentionally wrapped up in those mysterious phrases.

City of God.

The City of God was unquestionably the noblest work, both in its original design and in the fulness of its elaborate execution, which the genius of man had as yet contributed to the support of Christianity. Hitherto the Apologies had been framed to meet particular exigences: they were either brief and pregnant statements of the Christian doctrines; refutations of prevalent calumnies; invectives against the follies and crimes of Paganism; or confutations of anti-Christian works, like those of Celsus, Porphyry, or Julian, closely following their course of argument, and rarely expanding into general and comprehensive views of the great conflict. The City of God, in the first place, indeed, was designed to decide for ever the one great question, which alone kept in suspense the balance between Paganism and Christianity, the connection between the fall of the empire and the miseries under which the whole Roman society was groaning, with the desertion of the ancient religion of Rome. Even this part of his theme led Augustine into a full, and, if not impartial, yet far more comprehensive survey of the whole religion and philosophy of antiquity, than had been yet displayed in any Christian work. It has preserved more on some branches of these subjects than the whole surviving Latin literature. The City of

BOOK III.

God was not merely a defence, it was likewise an exposition of Christian doctrine. The last twelve books developed the whole system with a regularity and copiousness, as far as we know, never before attempted by any Christian writer. It was the first complete Christian theology.

A. D. 410.

Occasion of its composition.

The immediate occasion of this important work of Augustine was worthy of this powerful concentration of his talents and knowledge. The capture of Rome by the Goths had appalled the whole empire. So long as the barbarians only broke through the frontiers, or severed province after province from the dominion of the Emperor, men could close their eyes to the gradual declension and decay of the Roman supremacy; and in the rapid alternations of power, the empire, under some new Cæsar or Constantine, might again throw back the barbaric inroads; or where the barbarians were settled within the frontiers, awe them into peaceful subjects, or array them as valiant defenders of their dominions. As long as both Romes, more especially the ancient city of the West, remained inviolate, so long the fabric of the Roman greatness seemed unbroken, and she might still assert her title as Mistress of the World. The capture of Rome dissipated for ever these proud illusions; it struck the Roman world to the heart; and in the mortal agony of the old social system, men wildly grasped at every cause which could account for this unexpected, this inexplicable, phenomenon. They were as much overwhelmed with dread and wonder as if there had been no previous omens of

decay, no slow and progressive approach to the sacred walls; as if the fate of the city had not been already twice suspended by the venality, the mercy, or the prudence of the conqueror. Murmurs were again heard impeaching the new religion as the cause of this disastrous consummation: the deserted gods had deserted in their turn the apostate city.*

There seems no doubt that Pagan ceremonies took place in the hour of peril, to avert, if possible, the imminent ruin. The respect paid by the barbarians to the churches might, in the zealous or even the wavering votaries of Paganism, strengthen the feeling of some remote connection between the destroyer of the civil power and the destroyer of the ancient religions. The Roman aristocracy, which fled to different parts of the world, more particularly to the yet peaceful and uninvaded province of Africa; and among whom the feelings of attachment to the institutions and to the gods of Rome were still the strongest, were not likely to suppress the language of indignation and sorrow, or to refrain from the extenuation of their own cowardice and effeminacy, by ascribing the fate of the city to the irresistible power of the alienated deities.

Augustine dedicated thirteen years to the completion of this work, which was for ever to de- A. D. 413 to 426.

* Orosius attempted the same theme: the Pagans, he asserts, "præsentia tantum tempora, veluti malis extra solitum infestissima, ob hoc solum, quod creditur Christus, et colitur, idola autem minus coluntur, infamant." Heyne has well observed on this work of Orosius,—Excitaverat Augustini vibrantis arma exemplum Orosium, discipulum, ut et ipse arma sumeret, etsi imbellibus manibus. Opuscula, vi. p. 130.

BOOK III.

termine this solemn question, and to silence the last murmurs of expiring Paganism. The City of God is at once the funeral oration of the ancient society, the gratulatory panegyric on the birth of the new. It acknowledged, it triumphed in the irrevocable fall of the Babylon of the West, the shrine of idolatry; it hailed at the same time the universal dominion which awaited the new theocratic polity. The earthly city had undergone its predestined fate; it had passed away with all its vices and superstitions, with all its virtues and its glories (for the soul of Augustine was not dead to the noble reminiscences of Roman greatness), with its false gods and its Heathen sacrifices: its doom was sealed, and for ever. But in its place had arisen the City of God, the Church of Christ; a new social system had emerged from the ashes of the old; that system was founded by God, was ruled by divine laws, and had the divine promise of perpetuity.

The first ten books are devoted to the question of the connection between the prosperity and the religion of Rome; five to the influence of Paganism in this world; five in that in the world to come. Augustine appeals in the five first to the mercy shown by the conqueror, as the triumph of Christianity. Had the *Pagan* Radagaisus taken Rome, not a life would have been spared, no place would have been sacred. The *Christian* Alaric had been checked and overawed by the sanctity of the Christian character, and his respect for his Christian brethren. He denies that

worldly prosperity is an unerring sign of the divine favour; he denies the exemption of the older Romans from disgrace and distress, and recapitulates the crimes and the calamities of their history during their worship of their ancient gods. He ascribes their former glory to their valour, their frugality, their contempt of wealth, their fortitude, and their domestic virtues; he assigns their vices, their frightful profligacy of manners, their pride, their luxury, their effeminacy, as the proximate causes of their ruin. Even in their ruin they could not forget their dissolute amusements; the theatres of Carthage were crowded with the fugitives from Rome. In the five following books he examines the pretensions of Heathenism to secure felicity in the world to come; he dismisses with contempt the old popular religion, but seems to consider the philosophic Theism, the mystic Platonism of the later period, a worthier antagonist. He puts forth all his subtlety and power in refutation of these tenets.

The last twelve books place in contrast the origin, the pretensions, the fate, of the new city, that of God: he enters at large into the evidences of Christianity; he describes the sanctifying effects of the faith; but pours forth all the riches of his imagination and eloquence on the destinies of the church at the Resurrection. Augustine had no vision of the worldly power of the new city; he foresaw not the spiritual empire of Rome which would replace the new fallen Rome of Heathenism. With him the triumph of Christianity is not complete till the world itself, not merely its outward framework of society and

BOOK III.

the constitution of its kingdoms, has experienced a total change. In the description of the final kingdom of Christ, he treads his way with great dexterity and address between the grosser notions of the Millenarians, with their kingdom of earthly wealth, and power, and luxury (this he repudiates with devout abhorrence); and that finer and subtler spiritualism, which is ever approaching to Pantheism, and by the rejection of the bodily resurrection, renders the existence of the disembodied spirit too fine and impalpable for the general apprehension.

Life of Augustine.

The uneventful personal life of St. Augustine, at least, till towards its close, contrasts with that of Ambrose and Chrysostom. After the first throes and travail of his religious life, described with such dramatic fidelity in his Confessions, he subsided into a peaceful bishop in a remote and rather inconsiderable town.* He had not, like Ambrose, to interpose between rival Emperors, or to rule the conscience of the universal sovereign; or like Chrysostom, to enter into a perilous conflict with the vices of a capital and the intrigues of a court. Forced by the devout admiration of the people to assume the episcopate in the city of Hippo, he was faithful to his first bride, his earliest, though humble see. Not that his life was that of contemplative inactivity, or tranquil literary exertion; his personal conferences with the leaders of the Donatists, the Manicheans, the Arians, and Pelagians, and his presence in the councils of Carthage, displayed

* He was thirty-five before he was ordained presbyter, A.D. 389: he was chosen coadjutor to the Bishop of Hippo, A.D. 395.

his power of dealing with men. His letter to Count Boniface showed that he was not unconcerned with the public affairs, and his former connection with Boniface, who at one time had expressed his determination to embrace the monastic life, might warrant his remonstrance against the fatal revolt, which involved Boniface and Africa in ruin.

At the close of his comparatively peaceful life, Augustine was exposed to the trial of his severe and lofty principles; his faith and his superiority to the world were brought to the test in the fearful calamities which desolated the whole African province. No part of the empire had so long escaped; no part was so fearfully visited, as Africa by the invasion of the Vandals. The once prosperous and fruitful region presented to the view only ruined cities, burning villages, a population thinned by the sword, bowed to slavery, and exposed to every kind of torture and mutilation. With these fierce barbarians, the awful presence of Christianity imposed no respect. The churches were not exempt from the general ruin, the bishops and clergy from cruelty and death, the dedicated virgins from worse than death. In many places the services of religion entirely ceased from the extermination of the worshippers, or the flight of the priests. To Augustine, as the supreme authority in matters of faith or conduct, was submitted the grave question of the course to be pursued by the clergy; whether they were to seek their own security, or to confront the sword of the ravager. The

BOOK III.

advice of Augustine was at once lofty and discreet. Where the flock remained, it was cowardice, it was impiety, in the clergy to desert them, and to deprive them in those disastrous times of the consolatory offices of religion, their children of baptism, themselves of the holy Eucharist. But where the priest was an especial object of persecution, and his place might be supplied by another; where the flock was massacred or dispersed, or had abandoned their homes, the clergy might follow them, and if possible provide for their own security.

Augustine did not fall below his own high notions of Christian, of episcopal duty. When the Vandal army gathered around Hippo, one of the few cities which still afforded a refuge for the persecuted provincials, he refused, though more than seventy years old, to abandon his post. A. D. 430. In the third month of the siege he was released by death, and escaped the horrors of the capture, the cruelties of the conqueror, and the desolation of his church.*

* In the life of Augustine, I have chiefly consulted that prefixed to his works, and Tillemont, with the passages in his Confessions and Epistles.

CHAP. XI.

JEROME.—THE MONASTIC SYSTEM.

Jerome.

THOUGH not so directly or magisterially dominant over the Christianity of the West, the influence of Jerome has been of scarcely less importance than that of Augustine. Jerome was the connecting link between the East and the West; through him, as it were, passed over into the Latin hemisphere of Christendom that which was still necessary for its permanence and independence during the succeeding ages. The time of separation approached, when the Eastern and Western empires, the Latin and the Greek languages, were to divide the world. Western Christianity was to form an entirely separate system; the different nations and kingdoms which were to arise out of the wreck of the Roman empire were to maintain, each its national church, but there was to be a permanent centre of unity in that of Rome, considered as the common parent and federal head of Western Christendom. But before this vast and silent revolution took place, certain preparations, in which Jerome was chiefly instrumental, gave strength, and harmony, and vitality to the religion of the West, from which the precious inheritance has been secured to modern Europe.

The two leading transactions in which Jerome took the effective part, were — 1st, the introduction, or at least the general reception, of Mo-

BOOK III.

nachism in the West; 2d, the establishment of an authoritative and universally recognised version of the sacred writings into the Latin language. For both these important services, Jerome qualified himself by his visits to the East; he was probably the first occidental (though born in Dalmatia, he may be almost considered a Roman, having passed all his youth in that city) who became completely naturalised and domiciliated in Judæa; and his example, though it did not originate, strengthened to an extraordinary degree the passion for pilgrimages to the Holy Land; a sentiment in later times productive of such vast and unexpected results. In the earlier period, the repeated devastations of that devoted country, and still more its occupation by the Jews, had overpowered the natural veneration of the Christians for the scene of the life and sufferings of the Redeemer. It was an accursed rather than a holy region, desecrated by the presence of the murderers of the Lord, rather than endeared by the reminiscences of his personal ministry and expiatory death. The total ruin of the Jews, and their expulsion from Jerusalem by Hadrian; their dispersion into other lands, with the simultaneous progress of Christianity in Palestine, and their settlement in Ælia, the Roman Jerusalem, notwithstanding the profanation of that city by idolatrous emblems, allowed those more gentle and sacred feelings to grow up in strength and silence.*

* Augustine asserts that the *whole world* flocked to Bethlehem to see the place of Christ's nativity. t. i. p. 561. Pilgrimages, according to him, were undertaken to Arabia to see the dung-heap on which Job sate. t. ii. p. 59. For 180 years, according to Jerome, from Hadrian to Con-

Already, before the time of Jerome, pilgrims had flowed from all quarters of the world; and during his life, whoever had attained to any proficiency in religion, in Gaul, or in the secluded island of Britain, was eager to obtain a personal knowledge of these hallowed places. They were met by strangers from Armenia, Persia, India (the Southern Arabia), Æthiopia, the countless monks of Egypt, and from the whole of Western Asia.* Yet Jerome was, no doubt, the most influential pilgrim to the Holy Land; the increasing and general desire to visit the soil printed, as it were, with the footsteps, and moist with the redeeming blood of the Saviour, may be traced to his writings, which opened as it were a constant and easy communication, and established an intercourse, more or less regularly maintained, between Western Europe and Palestine.†

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stantine, the statue of Jupiter occupied the place of the resurrection, and a statue of Venus was worshipped on the *rock* of Calvary. But as the object of Hadrian was to insult the Jewish, not the Christian, religion, it seems not very credible that these two sites should be chosen for the Heathen temples. Hieronym. Oper. Epist. xlix. p. 505.

* Quicunque in Galliâ fuerat primus huc properat. Divisus ab orbe nostro Britannus, si in religione processerit, occiduo sole dimisso, quærit locum famâ sibi tantum, et Scripturarum relatione cognitum. Quid referamus Armenios, quid Persas, quid Indiæ, quid Æthiopiæ populos, ipsamque juxta Ægyptum, fertilem monachorum, Pontum et Cappadociam, Syriam, Cretam, et Mesopotamiam cunctaque orientis examina. This is the letter of a *Roman* female, Paula. Hieronym. Oper. Epist. xliv. p. 551.

† See the glowing description of all the religious wonders in the Holy Land in the Epitaphium Paulæ. An epistle, however, of Gregory of Nyssen strongly remonstrates against pilgrimages to the Holy Land, even from Cappadocia. He urges the dangers and suspicions to which pious recluses, especially women, would be subject with male attendants, either strangers or friends, on a lonely road; the dissolute words and sights which may be unavoidable in the inns; the dangers of robbery and violence in the Holy Land itself, of the moral state of which he draws a fearful picture. He asserts the religious superiority of Cappadocia,

BOOK III.

But besides this subordinate, if indeed subordinate, effect of Jerome's peculiar position between the East and West, he was thence both incited and enabled to accomplish his more immediately influential undertakings. In Palestine and in Egypt, Jerome became himself deeply imbued with the spirit of Monachism, and laboured with all his zeal to awaken the more tardy West to rival Egypt and Syria in displaying this sublime perfection of Christianity. By his letters, descriptive of the purity, the sanctity, the total estrangement from the deceitful world in these blessed retirements, he kindled the holy emulation, especially of the females, in Rome. Matrons and virgins of patrician families embraced with contagious fervour, the monastic life; and though the populous districts in the neighbourhood of the metropolis were not equally favourable for retreat, yet they attempted to practise the rigid observances of the desert in the midst of the busy metropolis.

For the second of his great achievements, the version of the sacred Scriptures, Jerome derived inestimable advantages, and acquired unprecedented authority, by his intercourse with the East. His residence in Palestine familiarised him with the language and peculiar habits of the sacred writers.

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which had more churches than any part of the world; and inquires, in plain terms, whether a man will believe the virgin birth of Christ the more by seeing Bethlehem, or his resurrection by visiting his tomb, or his ascension by standing on the Mount of Olives. Greg. Nyss. de eunt. Hieros.

The authenticity of this epistle is indeed contested by Roman Catholic writers; but I can see no internal evidence against its genuineness. Jerome's more sober letter to Paulinus, Epist. xxix. vol. iv. p. 563., should also be compared.

He was the first Christian writer of note who thought it worth while to study Hebrew. Nor was it the language alone; the customs, the topography, the traditions, of Palestine were carefully collected, and applied by Jerome, if not always with the soundest judgment, yet occasionally with great felicity and success to the illustration of the sacred writings.

Monachism.

The influence of Monachism upon the manners, opinions, and general character of Christianity, as well as that of the Vulgate translation of the Bible, not only on the religion, but on the literature of Europe, appear to demand a more extensive investigation; and as Jerome, if not the representative, was the great propagator of Monachism in the West, and as about this time this form of Christianity overshadowed and dominated throughout the whole of Christendom, it will be a fit occasion, although we have in former parts of this work not been able altogether to avoid it, to develope more fully its origin and principles.

It is singular to see this oriental influence successively enslaving two religions in their origin and in their genius so totally opposite to Monachism as Christianity and the religion of Mohammed. Both gradually and unreluctantly yield to the slow and inevitable change. Christianity, with very slight authority from the precepts, and none from the practice of the Author and first teachers, admitted this without inquiry as the perfection and consummation of its own theory. Its advocates and their willing auditors equally forgot that

BOOK III.

if Christ and his apostles had retired into the desert, Christianity would never have spread beyond the wilderness of Judæa. The transformation which afterwards took place of the fierce Arab marauder, or the proselyte to the martial creed of the Koran, into a dreamy dervish, was hardly more violent and complete, than that of the disciple of the great example of Christian virtue, or of the active and popular Paul, into a solitary anchorite.

Cœnobitism.

Still that which might appear most adverse to the universal dissemination of Christianity eventually tended to its entire and permanent incorporation with the whole of society. When Eremitism gave place to Cœnobitism; when the hermitage grew up into a convent, the establishment of these religious fraternities in the wildest solitudes gathered round them a Christian community, or spread, as it were, a gradually increasing belt of Christian worship, which was maintained by the spiritual services of the monks, who, though not generally ordained as ecclesiastics, furnished a constant supply for ordination. In this manner, the rural districts, which, in most parts, long after Christianity had gained the predominance in the towns, remained attached by undisturbed habit to the ancient superstition, were slowly brought within the pale of the religion. The monastic communities commenced, in the more remote and less populous districts of the Roman world, that ameliorating change which, at later times, they carried on beyond the frontiers. As afterwards they introduced civilisation and

Christianity among the barbarous tribes of North Germany or Poland, so now they continued in all parts a quiet but successful aggression on the lurking Paganism.

Origin of Monachism.

Monachism was the natural result of the incorporation of Christianity with the prevalent opinions of mankind, and in part of the state of profound excitement into which it had thrown the human mind. We have traced the universal predominance of the great principle, the inherent evil of matter. This primary tenet, as well of the Eastern religions as of the Platonism of the West, coincided with the somewhat ambiguous use of the term world in the sacred writings. Both were alike the irreclaimable domain of the Adversary of good. The importance assumed by the soul, now through Christianity become profoundly conscious of its immortality, tended to the same end. The deep and serious solicitude for the fate of that everlasting part of our being, the concentration of all its energies on its own individual welfare, withdrew it entirely within itself. A kind of sublime selfishness excluded all subordinate considerations. * The only security against the corruption which environed it on all sides seemed

* It is remarkable how rarely, if ever (I cannot call to mind an instance), in the discussions on the comparative merits of marriage and celibacy, the social advantages appear to have occurred to the mind; the benefit to mankind of raising up a race born from Christian parents and brought up in Christian principles. It is always argued with relation to the interests and the perfection of the individual soul; and even with regard to that, the writers seem almost unconscious of the softening and humanising effect of the natural affections, the beauty of parental tenderness and filial love.

BOOK III.

entire alienation from the contagion of matter; the constant mortification, the extinction, if possible, of those senses which were necessarily keeping up a dangerous and treasonable correspondence with the external universe. On the other hand, entire estrangement from the rest of mankind, included in the proscribed and infectious *world*, appeared no less indispensable. Communion with God alone was at once the sole refuge and perfection of the abstracted spirit; prayer the sole unendangered occupation, alternating only with that coarse industry which might give employment to the refractory members, and provide that scanty sustenance required by the inalienable infirmity of corporeal existence. The fears and the hopes were equally wrought upon — the fear of defilement and consequently of eternal perdition; the hope of attaining the serene enjoyment of the divine presence in the life to come. If any thought of love to mankind, as an unquestionable duty entailed by Christian brotherhood, intruded on the isolated being, thus labouring on the single object, his own spiritual perfection, it found a vent in prayer for their happiness, which excused all more active or effective benevolence.

Celibacy.

On both principles, of course, marriage was inexorably condemned.* Some expressions in the writings of St. Paul†, and emulation of the Gnostic

* There is a sensible and judicious book, entitled "Die Entführung der Erzwungenen Ehelosigkeit bei dem Christlichen und ihre Folge," von J. A. und Aug. Theiner, Altenburg, 1828, which enters fully into the origin and consequences of celibacy in the whole church.

† I agree with Theiner (p. 24.) in considering these precepts local and temporary, relating to the es-

sects, combining with these general sentiments, had very early raised celibacy into the highest of Christian virtues: marriage was a necessary evil, an inevitable infirmity of the weaker brethren. With the more rational and earlier writers, Cyprian, Athanasius, and even in occasional passages in Ambrose or Augustine, it had its own high and peculiar excellence; but even with them, virginity, the absolute estrangement from all sensual indulgence, was the transcendant virtue, the preassumption of the angelic state, the approximation to the beatified existence.*

Every thing conspired to promote, nothing remained to counteract, this powerful impulse. In the

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pecial circumstances of those whom St. Paul addressed.

* The general tone was that of the vehement Jerome. There must not only be vessels of gold and silver, but of wood and earthenware. This contemptuous admission of the necessity of the married life distinguished the orthodox from the Manichean, the Montanist, and the Encratite. Jerom. adv. Jovin. p. 146.

The sentiments of the Fathers on marriage and virginity may be thus briefly stated. I am not speaking with reference to the marriage of the clergy, which will be considered hereafter.

The earlier writers, when they are contending with the Gnostics, though they elevate virginity above marriage, speak very strongly on the folly, and even the impiety, of prohibiting or disparaging lawful wedlock. They acknowledge and urge the admitted fact that several of the Apostles were married. This is the tone of Ignatius (Cotel. Pat. Apost. ii. 77.), of Tertullian (licebat et Apostolis nubere et uxores circumducere. De Exhort. Castit.), above all, of Clement of Alexandria.

In the time of Cyprian, vows of virginity were not irrevocable. Si autem perseverare nolunt, vel non possunt. melius est ut nubant, quam in ignem delictis suis cadant. Epist. 62. And his general language, more particularly his tract de Habitu Virginum, implies that strong discipline was necessary to restrain the dedicated virgins from the vanities of the world.

But in the fourth century the eloquent Fathers vie with each other in exalting the transcendant, holy, angelic virtue of virginity. Every one of the more distinguished writers,—Basil, the two Gregories, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, has a treatise or treatises upon virginity, on which he expands with all the glowing language which he can command. It became

BOOK III.

Causes which tended to promote Monachism.

East this seclusion from the world was by no means uncommon. Even among the busy and restless Greeks, some of the philosophers had asserted the privilege of wisdom to stand aloof from the rest of mankind; the question of the superior excellence of the active or the contemplative life had been agitated on equal terms. But in some regions of the East, the sultry and oppressive heats, the general relaxation of the physical system, dispose constitutions of a certain temperament to a dreamy inertness. The indolence and prostration of the body produce a kind of activity in the mind, if that may properly be called activity which is merely giving loose to the imagination and the emotions, as they follow out a wild train of incoherent thought, or are agitated by impulses of spontaneous and ungoverned feeling. Ascetic Christianity ministered new aliment to this common propensity; it gave an object both vague and determinate enough to stimulate, yet never to satisfy or exhaust. The regularity of stated hours of prayer, and of a kind of idle industry, weaving

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a common doctrine that sexual intercourse was the sign and the consequence of the Fall; they forgot that the command to "increase and multiply" is placed in the Book of Genesis (i. 28.) before the Fall.

We have before (p. 199.) quoted passages from Greg. of Nazianzum. Gregory of Nyssa says, — ἡδονὴ δι' απάτης ἐγγινόμενη τῆς ἐκπτώσεως ἤρξατο — ἐν ἀνομίαις ἐστὶν ἡ σύλληψις, ἐν ἁμαρτίαις ἡ κύησις.. Greg. Nyss. de Virgin. c. 12. c. 13. But Jerome is the most vehement of all!—Nuptiæ terram replent, virginitas Paradisum. The unclean beasts went *by pairs* into the ark, the clean by seven. Though there is another mystery in the pairs, even the *unclean beasts* were not to be allowed a second marriage: — Ne in bestiis quidem et immundis avibus digamia comprobata sit. Adv. Jovin. vol. iv. p. 160. Laudo nuptias, laudo conjugium, sed quia mihi virgines generat. Ad Eustoch. p. 36.

mats, or plaiting baskets, alternated with periods of morbid reflection on the moral state of the soul, and of mystic communion with the Deity.* It cannot, indeed, be wondered that the new revelation, as it were, of the Deity; this profound and rational certainty of his existence; this infelt consciousness of his perpetual presence; these yet unknown impressions of his infinity, his power, and his love, should give a higher character to this eremitical enthusiasm, and attract men of loftier and more vigorous minds within its sphere. It was not merely the pusillanimous dread of encountering the trials of life which urged the humbler spirits to seek the safe retirement, or the natural love of peace, and the weariness and satiety of life, which commended this seclusion to those who were too gentle to mingle in, or who were exhausted with, the unprofitable turmoil of the world. Nor was it always the anxiety to mortify the rebellious and refractory body with more advantage; the one absorbing idea of the majesty of the Godhead almost seemed to swallow up all other considerations; the transcendant nature of the Triune Deity, the relation of the different persons in the Godhead to each other, seemed the only worthy objects of man's contemplative faculties. If the soul never aspired to that Pantheistic union with

* Nam pariter exercentes corporis animæque virtutes, exterioris hominis stipendia cum emolumentis interioris exæquant, lubricis motibus cordis, et fluctuationi cogitationum instabili, operum pondera, velut quandam tenacem atque immobilem anchoram præfigentes, cui volubilitas ac pervagatio cordis innexa intra cellæ claustra, velut in portu fidissimo valeat contineri. Cassian. Instit. ii. 13.

BOOK III.

the spiritual essence of being which is the supreme ambition of the higher Indian mysticism, their theory seemed to promise a sublime estrangement from all sublunary things, an occupation for the spirit, already, as it were, disembodied and immaterialised by its complete concentration on the Deity.

In Syria and in Egypt, as well as in the remoter East, the example had already been set both of solitary retirement and of religious communities. The Jews had both their hermitages and their cœnobitic institutions. Anchorites swarmed in the deserts near the Dead Sea*; and the Essenes, in the same district, and the Egyptian Therapeutæ, were strictly analogous to the Christian monastic establishments. In the neighbourhood of many of the Eastern cities were dreary and dismal wastes, incapable of, or unimproved by, cultivation, which seemed to allure the enthusiast to abandon the haunts of men and the vices of society. Egypt especially, where every thing excessive and extravagant found its birth or ripened with unexampled vigour, seemed formed for the encouragement of the wildest anchoritism. It is a long narrow valley, closed in on each side by craggy or by sandy deserts. The rocks were pierced either with natural caverns, or hollowed out by the hand of man into long subterranean cells and galleries for various uses, either of life, or of superstition, or of sepulture. The Christian, sometimes driven out by persecution (for persecution no doubt greatly

* Josephi Vita.

contributed to people these solitudes*), or prompted by religious feelings, to fly from the face of man, found himself, with no violent effort, in a dead and voiceless wilderness, under a climate which required no other shelter than the ceiling of the rock-hewn cave, and where actual sustenance might be obtained with little difficulty.

Antony.

St. Antony is sometimes described as the founder of the monastic life; it is clear, however, that he only imitated and excelled the example of less famous anchorites. But he may fairly be considered as its representative.

Antony† was born of Christian parents, bred up in the faith, and before he was twenty years old, found himself master of considerable wealth, and charged with the care of a younger sister. He was a youth of ardent imagination, vehement impulses, and so imperfectly educated as to be acquainted with no language but his native Egyptian.‡ A constant attendant on Christian worship, he had long looked back with admiration on those primitive times when the Christians laid all their worldly goods at the feet of the Apostles. One day he heard the sentence, "Go, sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, * * and come, and follow me." It seemed personally addressed to himself by the voice of God. He returned home, distributed his

* Paul, the first Christian hermit, fled from persecution. Hieronym. Vit. Paul. p. 69.

† The fact that the great Athanasius paused in his polemic warfare to write the life of Antony, may show the general admiration towards the monastic life.

‡ Jerome claims the honour of being the first hermit for Paul, in the time of Decius or Valerian, (Vit. Paul. p. 68.); but the whole life of Paul, and the visit of Antony to him, read like religious romance, and, from the preface of Jerome to the Life of Hilarion, did not find implicit credit in his own day.

BOOK III.

lands among his neighbours, sold his furniture and other effects, except a small sum reserved for his sister, whom he placed under the care of some pious Christian virgins. Another text, "Take no thought for the morrow," transpierced his heart, and sent him forth for ever from the society of men. He found an aged solitary, who dwelt without the city. He was seized with pious emulation, and from that time devoted himself to the severest asceticism. There was still, however, something gentle and humane about the asceticism of Antony. His retreat (if we may trust the romantic life of St. Hilarion, in the works of St. Jerome), was by no means of the horrid and savage character affected by some other recluses: it was at the foot of a high and rocky mountain, from which welled forth a stream of limpid water, bordered by palms, which afforded an agreeable shade. Antony had planted this pleasant spot with vines and shrubs; there was an enclosure for fruit trees and vegetables, and a tank from which the labour of Antony irrigated his garden. His conduct and character seemed to partake of this less stern and gloomy tendency.* He visited the most distinguished anchorites, but only to observe, that he might imitate the peculiar virtue of each; the gentle disposition of one; the constancy of prayer in another; the kindness, the patience, the industry, the vigils, the macerations, the love of study, the passionate contemplation of the Deity, the charity towards mankind. It was his devout ambition to equal or transcend each in his particular austerity, or distinctive excellence.

* Vita St. Hilarion. p. 85.

But man does not violate nature with impunity; the solitary state had its passions, its infirmities, its perils. The hermit could fly from his fellow men, but not from himself. The vehement and fervid temperament which drove him into the desert was not subdued; it found new ways of giving loose to its suppressed impulses. The self-centred imagination began to people the desert with worse enemies than mankind. Dæmonology, in all its multiplied forms, was now an established part of the Christian creed, and embraced with the greatest ardour by men in such a state of religious excitement, as to turn hermits. The trials, the temptations, the agonies, were felt and described as personal conflicts with hosts of impure, malignant, furious, fiends. In the desert, these beings took visible form and substance; in the day-dreams of profound religious meditation, in the visions of the agitated and exhausted spirit, they were undiscernible from reality.* It is impossible, in the wild legends which became an essential part of Christian literature, to decide how much is the disordered imagination of the saint, the self-deception of the credulous, or the fiction of the zealous writer. The very effort to suppress certain feelings has a natural tendency to awaken and strengthen them. The horror of carnal indulgence would not permit the sensual desires to die away into apathy. Men are apt to find what they seek in their own hearts, and by anxiously searching for

* Compare Jerome's Life of St. Hilarion, p. 76.

BOOK III.

the guilt of lurking lust, or desire of worldly wealth or enjoyment, the conscience, as it were, struck forcibly upon the chord which it wished to deaden, and made it vibrate with a kind of morbid, but more than ordinary, energy. Nothing was so licentious or so terrible as not to find its way to the cell of the recluse. Beautiful women danced around him; wild beasts of every shape, and monsters with no shape at all, howled and yelled and shrieked about him, while he knelt in prayer, or snatched his broken slumbers. "Oh how often in the desert," says Jerome, "in that vast solitude, which, parched by the sultry sun, affords a dwelling to the monks, did I fancy myself in the midst of the luxuries of Rome. I sate alone, for I was full of bitterness. My misshapen limbs were rough with sackcloth; and my skin was so squalid that I might have been taken for a negro. Tears and groans were my occupation every day, and all day: if sleep surprised me unawares, my naked bones, which scarcely held together, clashed on the earth. I will say nothing of my food or beverage: even the rich have nothing but cold water; any warm drink is a luxury. Yet even I, who for the fear of hell had condemned myself to this dungeon, the companion only of scorpions and wild beasts, was in the midst of girls dancing. My face was pale with fasting, but the mind in my cold body burned with desires; the fires of lust boiled up in the body, which was already dead. Destitute of all succour, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, washed them with my tears, dried them with my hair, and

subdued the rebellious flesh by a whole week's fasting." After describing the wild scenes into which he fled, the deep glens and shaggy precipices, — "The Lord is my witness," he concludes; "sometimes I appeared to be present among the angelic hosts, and sang, 'We will haste after thee for the sweet savour of thy ointments.'" * For at times, on the other hand, gentle and more than human voices were heard consoling the constant and devout recluse; and sometimes the baffled dæmon would humbly acknowledge himself to be rebuked before him. But this was in general after a fearful struggle. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies. The severest pain could alone subdue or distract the refractory desires, or the preoccupied mind. Human invention was exhausted in self-inflicted torments. The Indian faquir was rivalled in the variety of distorted postures and of agonising exercises. Some lived in clefts and caves; some in huts, into which the light of day could not penetrate; some hung huge weights to their arms, necks, or loins; some confined themselves in cages; some on the tops of mountains, exposed to the sun and weather. The most celebrated hermit at length for life condemned himself to stand in a fiery climate, on the narrow top of a pillar.† Nor were

Self-torture.

* Song of Solomon. Hieronym. Epist. xxii.

† The language of Evagrius (H. E. i. 13.) about Simeon vividly expresses the effect which he made on his own age. "Rivalling, while yet in the flesh, the conversation of angels, he withdrew himself from all earthly things, and doing violence to nature, which always has a downward tendency, he aspired after that which is on high; and standing midway between earth and heaven, he had communion with God, and glorified God with the angels; from the earth

BOOK III.

these always rude or uneducated fanatics. St. Arsenius had filled, and with universal respect, the dignified post of tutor to the Emperor Arcadius. But Arsenius became an hermit; and, among other things, it is related of him, that, employing himself in the common occupation of the Egyptian monks, weaving baskets of palm leaves, he changed only once a year the water in which the leaves were moistened. The smell of the fetid water was a just penalty for the perfumes which he had inhaled during his worldly life. Even sleep was a sin; an hour's unbroken slumber was sufficient for a monk. On Saturday evening, Arsenius laid down with his back to the setting sun, and continued awake, in fervent prayer, till the rising sun shone on his eyes*; so far had Christianity departed from its humane and benevolent and social simplicity.

It may be a curious question how far enthusiasm repays its votaries as far as the individual is concerned; in what degree these self-inflicted tortures added to or diminished the real happiness of man; how far these privations and bodily sufferings, which to the cool and unexcited reason appear intolerable, either themselves produced a callous insensibility, or were met by apathy arising out of the strong counter-excitement of the mind; to what

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offering supplications (πρεσβείας προάγων) as an ambassador to God; bringing down from heaven to men the divine blessing." The influence of the most holy martyr in the air (παναγίου καὶ ἀερίου μάρτυρος) on political affairs, lies beyond the range of the present history.

* Compare Fleury, xx. 1. 2.

extent, if still felt in unmitigated anguish, they were compensated by inward complacency from the conscious fulfilment of religious duty; the stern satisfaction of the will at its triumph over nature; the elevation of mind from the consciousness of the great object in view, or the ecstatic pre-enjoyment of certain reward. In some instances, they might derive some recompense from the respect, veneration, almost adoration, of men. Emperors visited the cells of these ignorant, perhaps superstitious, fanatics, revered them as oracles, and conducted the affairs of empire by their advice. The great Theodosius is said to have consulted John the Solitary on the issue of the war with Eugenius.* His feeble successors followed faithfully the example of his superstition.

Influence of Antony.

Antony appeared at the juncture most favourable for the acceptance of his monastic tenets.† His fame and his example tended still further to disseminate the spreading contagion. In every part the desert began to swarm with anchorites, who found it difficult to remain alone. Some sought out the most retired chambers of the ancient cemeteries; some those narrow spots which remained above water during the inundations, and saw with pleasure the tide arise which was to render them unapproachable to their fellow-creatures. But in all parts the determined solitary found himself constantly obliged to recede farther and farther; he could scarcely find a retreat so dismal, a cavern so

* Evagr. Vit. St. Paul. c. 1. † Hujus vitæ auctor Paulus Theodoret, v. 24. See Flechier, illustrator Antonius. Jerom. p. 46. Vie de Theodose, iv. 43.

BOOK III.

profound, a rock so inaccessible, but that he would be pressed upon by some zealous competitor, or invaded by the humble veneration of some disciple.

It is extraordinary to observe this infringement on the social system of Christianity, this disconnecting principle, which, pushed to excess, might appear fatal to that organisation in which so much of the strength of Christianity consisted, gradually self-expanding into a new source of power and energy, so wonderfully adapted to the age. The desire of the anchorite to isolate himself in unendangered seclusion was constantly balanced and corrected by the holy zeal or involuntary tendency to proselytism. The farther the saint retired from the habitations of men, the brighter and more attractive became the light of his sanctity ; the more he concealed himself, the more was he sought out by a multitude of admiring and emulous followers. Each built or occupied his cell in the hallowed neighbourhood. A monastery was thus imperceptibly formed around the hermitage ; and nothing was requisite to the incorporation of a regular community, but the formation of rules for common intercourse, stated meetings for worship, and something of uniformity in dress, food, and daily occupations. Some monastic establishments were no doubt formed at once, in imitation of the Jewish Therapeutæ ; but many of the more celebrated Egyptian establishments gathered, as it were, around the central cell of an Antony or Pachomius.*

* Pachomius was, strictly speaking, the founder of the cœnobitic establishments in Egypt ; Eustathius in Armenia ; Basil in Asia.

CHAP. XI.

Cœnobitic establishments.

Something like an uniformity of usage appears to have prevailed in the Egyptian monasteries. The brothers were dressed, after the fashion of the country, in long linen tunics, with a woollen girdle, a cloak, and over it a sheep-skin. They usually went barefooted, but at certain very cold or very parching seasons, they wore a kind of sandal. They did not wear the hair-cloth.* Their food was bread and water; their luxuries, occasionally a little oil or salt, a few olives, peas, or a single fig: they ate in perfect silence, each decury by itself. They were bound to strict obedience to their superiors; they were divided into decuries and centenaries, over whom the decurions and centurions presided: each had his separate cell.† The furniture of their cells was a mat of palm leaves and a bundle of the papyrus, which served for a pillow by night and a seat by day. Every evening and every night they were summoned to prayer by the sound of a horn. At each meeting were sung twelve psalms, pointed out, it was believed, by an angel. On certain occasions, lessons were read from the Old or New Testament. The assembly preserved total silence; nothing was heard but the voice of the chanter or reader. No one dared even to look at another.

Pachomius had 1400 monks in his establishment; 7000 acknowledged his jurisdiction.

* Jerome speaks of the cilicium as common among the Syrian monks, with whom he lived. Epist. i. Horrent sacco membra deformi. Even women assumed it. Epitaph. Paulæ, p. 678. Cassian is inclined to think it often a sign of pride. Instit. i. 3.

† The accounts of Jerome (in Eustochium, p. 45.) and of Cassian are blended. There is some difference as to the hours of meeting for prayers, but probably the cœnobitic institutes differed as to that and on some points of diet.

BOOK III.

The tears of the audience alone, or if he spoke of the joys of eternal beatitude, a gentle murmur of hope, was the only sound which broke the stillness of the auditory. At the close of each psalm, the whole assembly prostrated itself in mute adoration.* In every part of Egypt, from the Cataracts to the Delta, the whole land was bordered by these communities; there were 5000 cœnobites in the desert of Nitria alone †; the total number of male anchorites and monks was estimated at 76,000; the females at 27,700. Parts of Syria were, perhaps, scarcely less densely peopled with ascetics. Cappadocia and the provinces bordering on Persia boasted of numerous communities, as well as Asia Minor and the eastern parts of Europe. Though the monastic spirit was in its full power, the establishment of regular communities in Italy must be reserved for Benedict of Nursia, and lies beyond the bounds of our present history. The enthusiasm pervaded all orders. Men of rank, of family, of wealth, of education, suddenly changed the luxurious palace for the howling wilderness, the flatteries of men for the total silence of the desert. They voluntarily abandoned their estates, their connections, their worldly prospects. The

* Tantum a cunctis præbetur silentium, ut cum in unum tam numerosa fratrum multitudo conveniat, præter illum, qui consurgens psalmum decantat in medio, nullus hominum penitus adesse credatur. No one was heard to spit, to sneeze, to cough, or to yawn — there was not even a sigh or a groan — nisi fortè hæc quæ per excessum mentis claustra oris effugerit, quæque insensibiliter cordi obrepserit, immoderato scilicet atque intolerabili spiritûs fervore succenso, dum ea quæ ignita mens in semetipsâ non prævalet continere, per ineffabilem quendam gemitum pectoris sui conclavibus evaporare conatur. Cassian. Instit. ii. 10.

† Jerom. ad Eustoch. p. 44.

CHAP. XI.

desire of fame, of power, of influence, which might now swell the ranks of the ecclesiastics, had no concern in their sacrifice. Multitudes must have perished without the least knowledge of their virtues or their fate transpiring in the world. Few could obtain or hope to obtain the honour of canonisation, or that celebrity which Jerome promises to his friend Blesilla, to live not merely in heaven, but in the memory of man; to be consecrated to immortality by his writings. *

Dangers of cœnobitism.

But the cœnobitic establishments had their dangers no less than the cell of the solitary hermit. Besides those consequences of seclusion from the world, the natural results of confinement in this close separation from mankind and this austere discharge of stated duties, were too often found to be the proscription of human knowledge and the extinction of human sympathies. Christian wisdom and Christian humanity could find no place in their unsocial system. A morose, and sullen, and contemptuous ignorance could not but grow up where there was no communication with the rest of mankind, and the human understanding was rigidly confined to certain topics. The want of objects of natural affection could not but harden the heart; and those who, in their stern religious austerity are merciless to themselves, are apt to be merciless to others †: their callous and insensible hearts have

Bigotry.

* Quæ cum Christo vivit in cœlis, in hominum quoque ore victura est. * * Nunquam in meis moritura est libris. Epist. xxiii. p. 60.

† There is a cruel history of an abbot, Mucius, in Cassian. Mucius entreated admission into a monastery. He had one little boy with him of eight years old. They were placed in separate cells, lest the

BOOK III.

no sense of the exquisitely delicate and poignant feelings which arise out of the domestic affections. Bigotry has always found its readiest and sternest executioners among those who have never known the charities of life.

These fatal effects seem inherent consequences of Monasticism; its votaries could not but degenerate from their lofty and sanctifying purposes. That which in one generation was sublime enthusiasm, in the next became sullen bigotry, or sometimes wrought the same individual into a stern forgetfulness, not only of the vices and follies, but of all the more generous and sacred feelings of humanity. In the cœnobitic institutes was added a strong corporate spirit, and a blind attachment to their own opinions, which were identified with religion and the glory of God. The monks of Nitria, from simple and harmless enthusiasts, became ferocious bands of partisans; instead of remaining aloof in jealous seclusion from the factions of the rest of the world, they rushed down armed into Alexandria: what they consi-

Fanaticism.

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father's heart should be softened and indisposed to total renunciation of all earthly joys, by the sight of his child. That he might still farther prove his Christian obedience!! and self-denial, the child was systematically neglected, dressed in rags, and so dirty, as to be disgusting to the father; he was frequently beaten, to try whether it would force tears down the parent's squalid cheeks. "*Nevertheless, for the love of Christ!!!* and from the *virtue* of obedience, the heart of the father remained hard and unmoved," thinking little of his child's tears, only of his own humility and perfection. He at length was urged to show the last mark of his submission by throwing the child into the river. As if this was a *commandment of God*, he seized the child, and "the work of faith and obedience" would have been accomplished, if the brethren had not interposed, "and, as it were, rescued the child from the waters." And Cassian relates this as an act of the highest religious heroism! Lib. iv. 27.

dered a sacred cause inflamed and warranted a ferocity not surpassed by the turbulent and blood-thirsty rabble of that city. In support of a favourite doctrine, or in defence of a popular prelate, they did not consider that they were violating their own first principles, in yielding to all the savage passions, and mingling in the bloody strife of that world which they had abandoned. CHAP. XI.

Total seclusion from mankind is as dangerous to enlightened religion as to Christian charity. We might have expected to find among those who separated themselves from the world, to contemplate, undisturbed, the nature and perfections of the Deity, in general, the purest and most spiritual notions of the Godhead. Those whose primary principle was dread of a corruption of matter would be the last coarsely to materialise their divinity. But those who could elevate their thoughts, or could maintain them at this height, were but a small part of the vast numbers, whom the many mingled motives of zeal, superstition, piety, pride, emulation, or distaste for the world, led into the desert; they required something more gross and palpable than the fine and subtle conception of a spiritual being. Superstition, not content with crowding the brain with imaginary figments, spread its darkening mists over the Deity himself. Ignorance.

It was among the monks of Egypt that anthropomorphism assumed its most vulgar and obstinate form. They would not be persuaded that the expressions in the sacred writings which ascribe human acts, and faculties, and passions to the Deity were to

BOOK III.

be understood as a condescension to the weakness of our nature; they seemed disposed to compensate to themselves for the loss of human society by degrading the Deity, whom they professed to be their sole companion, to the likeness of man. Imagination could not maintain its flight, and they could not summon reason, which they surrendered with the rest of their dangerous freedom, to supply its place; and generally superstition demanded and received the same implicit and resolute obedience as religion itself. Once having humanised the Deity, they could not be weaned from the object of their worship. The great cause of quarrel between Theophilus, the Archbishop of Alexandria, and the monks of the adjacent establishments, was his vain attempt to enlighten them on those points to which they obstinately adhered, as the vital and essential part of their faith.

Pride, moreover, is almost the necessary result of such distinctions as the monks drew between themselves and the rest of mankind; and prejudice and obstinacy are the natural fruits of pride. Once having embraced opinions, however, as in this instance, contrary to their primary principles, small communities are with the utmost difficulty induced to surrender those tenets in which they support and strengthen each other by the general concurrence. The anthropomorphism of the Egyptian monks resisted alike argument and authority. The bitter and desperate remonstrance of the aged Serapion, when he was forced to surrender his anthropomorphic notions of the Deity, —"You have

deprived me of my God*," shows not merely the degraded intellectual state of the monks of Egypt, but the incapacity of the mass of mankind to keep up such high-wrought and imaginative conceptions. Enthusiasm of any particular kind wastes itself as soon as its votaries become numerous; it may hand down its lamp from individual to individual for many generations; but when it would include a whole section of society, it substitutes some new incentive, strong party or corporate feeling, habit, advantage, or the pride of exclusiveness, for its original disinterested zeal; and can never for a long period adhere to its original principles.

General effects of Monachism on Christianity.

The effect of Monachism on Christianity, and on society at large, was of very mingled character. Its actual influence on the population of the empire was probably not considerable, and would scarcely counterbalance the increase arising out of the superior morality, as regards sexual intercourse, introduced by the Christian religion.† Some apprehensions, indeed, were betrayed on this point, and when the opponents of Monachism urged,

* Cassian Collat. x. 1.

† There is a curious passage of St. Ambrose on this point. "Si quis igitur putat, conservatione virginum minui genus humanum, consideret, quia, ubi paucæ virgines, ibi etiam pauciores homines: ubi virginitatis studia crebriora, ibi numerum quoque hominum esse majorem. Dicite, quantas Alexandrina, totiusque Orientis, et Africana ecclesia, quotannis sacrare consueverint. Pauciores hic homines prodeunt, quam illic virgines consecrantur." We should wish to know whether there was any statistical ground for this singular assertion, that, in those regions in which celibacy was most practised, the population increased — or whether Egypt, the East, and Africa, were generally more prolific than Italy. The assertion that the vows of virginity in those countries exceeded the births in the latter is, most probably, to be set down to antithesis.

BOOK III.

that if such principles were universally admitted, the human race would come to an end, its resolute advocates replied, that the Almighty, if necessary, would appoint new means for the propagation of mankind.

On political affairs.

The withdrawal of so much ardour, talent, and virtue into seclusion, which, however elevating to the individual, became altogether unprofitable to society, might be considered a more serious objection. The barren world could ill spare any active or inventive mind. Public affairs, at this disastrous period, demanded the best energies which could be combined from the whole Roman world for their administration. This dereliction of their social duties by so many, could not but leave the competition more open to the base and unworthy, particularly as the actual abandonment of the world, and the capability of ardent enthusiasm, in men of high station, or of commanding intellect, displayed a force and independence of character which might, it should seem, have rendered important active service to mankind. If barbarians were admitted by a perilous, yet inevitable policy, into the chief military commands, was not this measure at least hastened, not merely by the general influence of Christianity, which reluctantly permitted its votaries to enter into the army, but still more by Monachism, which withdrew them altogether into religious inactivity? The civil and fiscal departments, and especially that of public education conducted by salaried professors, might also be deprived of some of the most eligible and useful candidates for employment. At a time of such acknowledged deficiency, it may have appeared

little less than a treasonable indifference to the public welfare, to break all connection with mankind, and to dwell in unsocial seclusion entirely on individual interests. Such might have been the remonstrance of a sober and dispassionate Pagan*, and in part of those few more rational Christians, who could not consider the rigid monastic Christianity as the original religion of its divine founder.

If, indeed, this peaceful enthusiasm had counteracted any general outburst of patriotism, or left vacant or abandoned to worthless candidates posts in the public service which could be commanded by great talents and honourable integrity, Monachism might fairly be charged with weakening the energies and deadening the resistance of the Roman empire to its gathering and multiplying adversaries. But the state of public affairs probably tended more to the growth of Monachism than Monachism to the disorder and disorganisation of public affairs. The partial and unjust distribution of the rewards of public service; the uncertainty of distinction in any career, which entirely depended on the favouritism and intrigue within the narrow circle of the court; the difficulty of emerging to eminence under a despotism by fair and honourable means; disgust and disappointment at slighted pretensions and baffled hopes; the general and apparently hopeless oppression which weighed down all mankind; the total extinction of the generous feelings of freedom; the conscious decrepitude of the human mind; the inevitable conviction that its productive energies in knowledge,

* Compare the law of Valens, de Monachis, quoted above,

BOOK III.

literature, and arts, were extinct and effete, and that every path was preoccupied, — all these concurrent motives might naturally, in a large proportion of the most vigorous and useful minds, generate a distaste and weariness of the world. Religion, then almost universally dominant, would seize on this feeling, and enlist it in her service: it would avail itself of, not produce, the despondent determination to abandon an ungrateful world; it would ennoble and exalt the preconceived motives for seclusion; give a kind of conscious grandeur to inactivity, and substitute a dreamy but elevating love for the Deity for contemptuous misanthropy, as the justification for the total desertion of social duty. Monachism, in short, instead of precipitating the fall of the Roman empire, by enfeebling in any great degree its powers of resistance, enabled some portion of mankind to escape from the feeling of shame and misery. Amid the irremediable evils and the wretchedness that could not be averted, it was almost a social benefit to raise some part of mankind to a state of serene indifference, to render some at least superior to the general calamities. Monachism, indeed, directly secured many in their isolation from all domestic ties, from that worst suffering inflicted by barbarous warfare, the sight of beloved females outraged, and innocent children butchered. In those times, the man was happiest who had least to lose, and who exposed the fewest vulnerable points of feeling or sympathy: the natural affections, in which, in ordinary times, consists the best happiness of man, were in those days such perilous

Some of its advantages.

indulgences, that he who was entirely detached from them embraced, perhaps, considering temporal views alone, the most prudent course. The solitary could but suffer in his own person; and though by no means secure in his sanctity from insult, or even death, his self-inflicted privations hardened him against the former, his high-wrought enthusiasm enabled him to meet the latter with calm resignation: he had none to leave whom he had to lament, none to lament him after his departure. The spoiler who found his way to his secret cell was baffled by his poverty; and the sword which cut short his days but shortened his painful pilgrimage on earth, and removed him at once to an anticipated heaven. With what different feelings would he behold, in his poor, and naked, and solitary cell, the approach of the blood-thirsty barbarians, from the father of a family, in his splendid palace, or his more modest and comfortable private dwelling, with a wife in his arms, whose death he would desire to see rather than that worse than death to which she might first be doomed in his presence; with helpless children clinging around his knees: the blessings which he had enjoyed, the wealth or comfort of his house, the beauty of his wife, of his daughters, or even of his sons, being the strongest attraction to the spoiler, and irritating more violently his merciless and unsparing passions. If to some the monastic state offered a refuge for the sad remainder of their bereaved life, others may have taken warning in time, and with deliberate forethought refused to

BOOK III.

implicate themselves in tender connections, which were threatened with such deplorable end. Those, who secluded themselves from domestic relations, from other motives, at all events were secured from such miseries, and might be envied by those who had played the game of life with a higher stake, and ventured on its purest pleasures, with the danger of incurring all its bitterest reverses.

Effect on the maintenance of Christianity.

Monachism tended powerfully to keep up the vital enthusiasm of Christianity. Allusion has been made to its close connection with the conversion both of the Roman and the Barbarian; and to the manner in which, from its settlement in some retired Pagan district, it gradually disseminated the faith, and sometimes the industrious, always the moral, influence of Christianity through the neighbourhood in a gradually expanding circle. Its peaceful colonies, within the frontier of Barbarism, slowly but uninterruptedly subdued the fierce or indolent savages to the religion of Christ and the manners and habits of civilisation. But its internal influence was not less visible, immediate, and inexhaustible. The more extensive dissemination of Christianity naturally weakened its authority. When the small primitive assembly of the Christians grew into an universal church; when the village, the town, the city, the province, the empire, became in outward form and profession Christian, the practical Heathenism only retired to work more silently and imperceptibly into the Christian system. The wider the circle, the fainter the line of distinction from the surrounding waters. Small societies have

a kind of self-acting principle of conservation within. Mutual inspection generates mutual awe; the generous rivalry in religious attainment keeps up regularity in attendance on the sacred institutions, and at least propriety of demeanour. Such small communities may be disturbed by religious faction, but are long before they degenerate into unchristian licentiousness, or languish into religious apathy. But when a large proportion of Christians received the faith as an inheritance from their fathers rather than from personal conviction; when hosts of deserters from Paganism passed over into the opposite camp, not because it was the best, but because it was the most flourishing cause; it became inexpedient, as well as impossible, to maintain the severer discipline of former times. But Monachism was constantly reorganising small societies, in which the bond of aggregation was the common religious fervour, in which emulation continually kept up the excitement, and mutual vigilance exercised unresisted authority. The exaggeration of their religious sentiments was at once the tenure of their existence, and the guarantee for their perpetuity. Men would never be wanting to enrol themselves in their ranks, and their constitution prevented them from growing to an unmanageable size; when one establishment or institution wore out, another was sure to spring up. The republics of Monachism were constantly reverting to their first principles, and undergoing a vigorous and thorough reformation. Thus, throughout the whole of Christian history, until, or even

BOOK III.

after, the Reformation, within the church of Rome, we find either new monastic orders rising, or the old remodelled and regulated by the zeal of some ardent enthusiast; the associatory principle, that great political and religious engine which is either the conservative or the destructive power in every period of society, was constantly embracing a certain number of persons devoted to a common end; and the new sect, distinguished by some peculiar badge of dress, of habit, or of monastic rule, re-embodied some of the fervour of primitive Christianity, and awakened the growing lethargy, by the example of unusual austerities, or rare and exemplary activity in the dissemination of the faith.

The beneficial tendency of this constant formation of young and vigorous societies in the bosom of Christianity was of more importance in the times of desolation and confusion which impended over the Roman empire. In this respect, likewise, their lofty pretensions insured their utility. Where reason itself was about to be in abeyance, rational religion would have had but little chance: it would have commanded no respect. Christianity, in its primitive simple and unassuming form, might have imparted its holiness, and peace, and happiness, to retired families, whether in the city or the province, but its modest and retiring dignity would have made no impression on the general tone and character of society. There was something in the seclusion of religious men from mankind, in their standing aloof from the rest of the world, calcu-

lated to impress barbarous minds with a feeling of their peculiar sanctity. The less they were like to ordinary men, the more, in the ordinary estimation, they were approximated to the divinity. At all events, this apparently broad and manifest evidence of their religious sincerity would be more impressive to unreasoning minds than the habits of the clergy, which approached more nearly to those of the common laity.*

Influence on the clergy.

The influence of this continual rivalry of another sacred, though not decidedly sacerdotal class, upon the secular clergy, led to important results. We may perhaps ascribe to the constant presence of Monachism the continuance and the final recognition of the celibacy of the clergy, the vital principle of the ecclesiastical power in the middle ages. Without the powerful direct support which they received from the monastic orders; without the indirect authority over the minds of men which flowed from their example, and inseparably connected, in the popular mind, superior sanctity with the renunciation of marriage, the ambitious popes would never have been able, particularly in the north, to part the clergy by this strong line of demarcation from the profane laity. As it was, it required the most vigorous and continued effort

* The monks were originally laymen (Cassian, v. 26.); gradually churches were attached to the monasteries, but these were served by regularly ordained clergy. — (Pallad. Hist. Lausiaca.): but their reputation for sanctity constantly exposed them to be seized and consecrated by the ardent admiration of their followers. Theiner has collected with considerable labour a long list of the more celebrated prelates of the church who had been monks. p. 106. Ita ergo age et vive in monasterio, ut clericus esse merearis. Hieron. Epist. ad Rustic. 95.

BOOK III.

In promoting celibacy.

to establish, by ecclesiastical regulation and papal power, that which was no longer in accordance with the religious sentiments of the clergy themselves. The general practice of marriage, or of a kind of legalised concubinage, among the northern clergy, showed the tendency, if it had not been thus counteracted by the rival order, and by the dominant *ecclesiastical* policy of the Church.* But it is impossible to calculate the effect of that complete blending up of the clergy with the rest of the community which would probably have ensued from the gradual abrogation of this single distinction at this juncture. The interests of their order, in men connected with the community by the ordinary social ties, would have been secondary to their own personal advancement, or that of their families. They would have ceased to be a peculiar and separate caste, and sunk down into the common penury, rudeness, and ignorance. Their influence would be closely connected with their wealth and dignity, which, of course, on the other hand, would tend to augment their influence ; but that corporate ambition which induced them to consider the cause of their order as their own ; that desire of riches, which wore the honourable appearance of personal disinterestedness, and zeal for the splendour of religon, could not have existed but in a class completely insulated from the common feelings and interests of the community. Individual members of the clergy might have become wealthy, and ob-

* The general question of the celibacy of the clergy will be subsequently examined.

tained authority over the ignorant herd, but there would have been no opulent and powerful Church, acting with vigorous unity, and arranged in simultaneous hostility against Barbarism and Paganism.

Our history must hereafter trace the connection of the independence and separate existence of the clergy with the maintenance and the authority of Christianity. But even as conservators of the lingering remains of science, arts, and letters, as the sole order to which some kind of intellectual education was necessary, when knowledge was a distinction which alone commanded respect, the clergy were, not without advantage, secured by their celibacy from the cares and toils of social life. In this respect, Monachism acted in two ways; as itself the most efficient guardian of what was most worth preserving in the older civilisation, and as preventing, partly by emulation, partly by this enforcement of celibacy, the secular clergy from degenerating universally into that state of total ignorance which prevailed among them in some quarters.

It is impossible to survey Monachism in its general influence, from the earliest period of its interworking into Christianity, without being astonished and perplexed with its diametrically opposite effects. Here, it is the undoubted parent of the blindest ignorance and the most ferocious bigotry, sometimes of the most debasing licentiousness; there, the guardian of learning, the author of civilisation, the propagator of humble

BOOK III.

and peaceful religion. To the dominant spirit of Monachism may be ascribed some part at least of the gross superstition and moral inefficiency of the church in the Byzantine empire; to the same spirit much of the salutary authority of Western Christianity, its constant aggressions on barbarism, and its connection with the Latin literature. Yet neither will the different genius of the East and West account for this contradictory operation of the monastic spirit in the two divisions of the Roman empire. If human nature was degraded by the filth and fanatic self-torture, the callous apathy, and the occasional sanguinary violence, of the Egyptian or Syrian monk, yet the monastic retreat sent forth its Basils and Chrysostoms, who seemed to have braced their strong intellects by the air of the desert. Their intrepid and disinterested devotion to their great cause, the complete concentration of their whole faculties on the advancement of Christianity, seemed strengthened by this entire detachment from mankind.

Nothing can be conceived more apparently opposed to the designs of the God of nature, and to the mild and beneficent spirit of Christianity; nothing more hostile to the dignity, the interests, the happiness, and the intellectual and moral perfection of man, than the monk afflicting himself with unnecessary pain, and thrilling his soul with causeless fears; confined to a dull routine of religious duties, jealously watching, and proscribing every emotion of pleasure as a sin against the benevolent Deity; dreading

knowledge as an impious departure from the becoming humility of man. CHAP. XI.

On the other hand, what generous or lofty mind can refuse to acknowledge the grandeur of that superiority to all the cares and passions of mortality; the felicity of that state which is removed far above the fears or the necessities of life; that sole passion of admiration and love of the Deity, which no doubt was attained by some of the purer and more imaginative enthusiasts of the cell or the cloister. Who still more will dare to depreciate that heroism of Christian benevolence, which underwent this self-denial of the lawful enjoyments and domestic charities of which it had neither extinguished the desire, nor subdued the regret, not from the slavish fear of displeasing the Deity, or the selfish ambition of personal perfection; but from the genuine desire of advancing the temporal and eternal improvement of mankind; of imparting the moral amelioration and spiritual hopes of Christianity to the wretched and the barbarous; of being the messengers of Christian faith, and the ministers of Christian charity, to the Heathen, whether in creed or in character.

Life of Jerome.

We return from this long, but not unnecessary digression, to the life of Jerome, the great advocate of Monachism in the West. Jerome began and closed his career as a monk of Palestine: he attained, he aspired to, no dignity in the church. Though ordained a presbyter against his will, he escaped the episcopal dignity which was forced upon his distinguished contemporaries. He left to

BOOK III.

Ambrose, to Chrysostom, and to Augustine, the authority of office, and was content with the lower, but not less extensive, influence of personal communication, or the effect of his writings. After having passed his youth in literary studies in Rome, and travelling throughout the West, he visited Palestine. During his voyage to the East, he surveyed some great cities, and consulted their libraries; he was received in Cyprus by the Bishop Epiphanius. In Syria, he plunged at once into the severest austerities of asceticism. We have already inserted the lively description of the inward struggles and agonies which tried him during his first retreat in the Arabian desert.

Trials of Jerome in his retreat.

But Jerome had other trials peculiar to himself. It was not so much the indulgence of the coarser passions, the lusts and ambition of the world, which distressed his religious sensibilities*, it was the nobler and more intellectual part of his being which was endangered by the fond reminiscences of his former days. He began to question the lawfulness of those literary studies which had been the delight of his youth. He had brought with him, his sole companions, besides the sacred books of his religion, the great masters of poetry and philosophy, of Greek and Latin style; and the magic of Plato's and Cicero's language, to his refined and fastidious ear, made the sacred writings of Christianity, on which he was intently fixed,

* Jerome says,—"Prima est virginitas à nativitate; secunda virginitas à secundâ nativitate;" he ingenuously confesses that he could only boast of the second. Epist. xxv. iv. p. 242.; Oper. iv. p. 459.

CHAP. XI.

His classical studies.

appear rude and barbarous. In his retreat in Bethlehem he had undertaken the study of Hebrew*, as a severe occupation to withdraw him from those impure and worldly thoughts which his austerities had not entirely subdued; and in the weary hours when he was disgusted with his difficult task, he could not refrain from recurring, as a solace, to his favourite authors. But even this indulgence alarmed his jealous conscience; though he fasted before he opened his Cicero, his mind dwelt with too intense delight on the language of the orator; and the distaste with which he passed from the musical periods of Plato to the verses of the Prophets, of which his ear had not yet perceived the harmony, and his Roman taste had not perhaps imbibed the full sublimity, appeared to him as an impious offence against his religion.† The inward struggles of his mind threw him into a fever, he was thought to be dead, and in the lethargic dream of his distempered imagination, he thought that he beheld himself before the throne of the great Judge, before the brightness of which he dared not lift up his eyes. "Who art thou?" demanded the awful voice. — "A Christian," answered the trembling Jerome.‡

* His description of Hebrew, as compared with Latin, is curious: — "Ad quam edomandam, cuidem fratri, qui ex Hebræis crediderat, me in disciplinam dedi ut post Quintiliani acumina, gravitatemque Frontonis, et levitatem Plinii, alphabetum discerem et *stridentia anhelaque verba* meditarer — quid ibi laboris insumserim?" Epist. xcv. ad Rusticum, p. 774.

† Si quando in memet reversus, Prophetas legere cœpissem, sermo horrebat incultus. Epist. xviii. ad Eustoch. iv. p. 42.

‡ Interim parantur exequiæ, et vitalis animæ calor, toto frigescente jam corpore, in solo tantum tepente pulvisculo, palpitabat; quum subitò raptus in spiritu, ad tribunal judicis pertrahor; ubi tantum luminis, et tantum erat ex circum-

BOOK III.

"'Tis false," sternly replied the voice, "thou art no Christian, thou art a Ciceronian. Where the treasure is, there is the heart also." Yet, however the scrupulous conscience of Jerome might tremble at this profane admixture of sacred and heathen studies, he was probably qualified in a high degree by this very discordant collision of opposite tastes for one of the great services which he was to render to Christianity. No writer, without that complete mastery over the Latin language, which could only be attained by constant familiarity with its best models, could so have harmonised its genius with the foreign elements which were to be mingled with it, as to produce the vivid and glowing style of the Vulgate Bible. That this is far removed from the purity of Tully, no one will question: we shall hereafter consider more at length its genius and its influence; but we may conjecture what would have been the harsh, jarring, and inharmonious discord of the opposing elements, if the translator had only been conversant with the African Latinity of Tertullian, or the elaborate obscurity of writers like Ammianus Marcellinus.

Return to Rome.

Jerome could not, in the depths of his retreat, or in the absorbing occupation of his studies, escape being involved in those controversies which distracted the Eastern churches, and penetrated to the cell of the remotest anchorite. He returned

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stantium claritate fulgoris, ut projectus in terram, sursùm aspicere non auderem. Interrogatus de conditione, Christianum me esse respondi. Et ille qui præsidebat mortuis ait, Ciceronianus es, non Christianus; *ubi enim thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum*. Ad Eustoch. Epist. xviii. iv. p. 42.

to the West to avoid the restless polemics of his brother monks. On his return to Rome, the fame of his piety and talents commended him to the confidence of the Pope Damasus*, by whom he was employed in the most important affairs of the Roman see. But either the influence or the opinions of Jerome, excited the jealousy of the Roman clergy, whose vices Jerome paints in no softened colours. We almost, in this contest, behold a kind of prophetic prelude to the perpetual strife, which has existed in almost all ages, between the secular and regular clergy, the hierarchical and monastic spirit. Though the monastic opinions and practices were by no means unprecedented in Italy (they had been first introduced by Athanasius in his flight from Egypt); though they were maintained by Ambrose, and practised by some recluses; yet the pomp, the wealth, and the authority of the Roman ecclesiastics, which is described by the concurrent testimony of the Heathen historian† and the Christian Jerome, would not humbly brook the greater popularity of these severer doctrines, nor patiently submit to the estrangement of some of their more opulent and distinguished proselytes, particularly among the females. Jerome admits, indeed, with specious, but doubtful humility, the inferiority of the unordained monk to the ordained priest. The clergy were the succesors of the Apostles; their lips could make the body of Christ; they had the keys of

Morality of the Roman clergy.

* Epist. xii. p. 744. Tillemont, Vie de Jerome.
† Ammianus Marcellinus. See Postea.

BOOK III.

heaven, until the day of judgment; they were the shepherds, the monks only part of the flock. Yet the clergy, no doubt, had the sagacity to foresee the dangerous rival, as to influence and authority, which was rising up in Christian society. The great object of contention now was the command over the high-born and wealthy females of Rome. Jerome, in his advice to the clergy, cautiously warns them against the danger of female intimacy.* He, however, either considered himself secure, or under some peculiar privilege, or justified by the prospect of greater utility, to suspend his laws on his own behalf. He became a kind of confessor, he directed the sacred studies, he overlooked the religious conduct, of more than one of these pious ladies. The ardour and vehemence with which his ascetic opinions were embraced, and the more than usually familiar intercourse with matrons and virgins of rank, may perhaps have offended the pride, if not the propriety, of Roman manners. The more temperate and rational of the clergy, in their turn, may have thought the zeal with which these female converts of Jerome were prepared to follow their teacher to the Holy Land, by no means a safe precedent; they may have taken alarm at the yet unusual fervour of language with which female ascetics were celebrated as united, by the nuptial tie, to Christ†, and exhorted, in the glowing ima-

Influence over females of Rome.

* Epist. ad Heliodorum, p. 10.

† See the Epistle ad Eustochium. The whole of this letter is a singular union of religious earnestness and what, to modern feeling, would seem strange indelicacy if not immodesty, with still stranger liberty with the language of Scripture. He seems to say that Eustochium was the first noble

gery of the Song of Solomon, to devote themselves to their spiritual spouse. They were the brides of Christ;—Christ, worshipped by angels in heaven, ought to have angels to worship him on earth.* With regard to Jerome and his high-born friends, their suspicions were, doubtless, unjust.

Character of Roman females.

It is singular, indeed, to contrast the different descriptions of the female aristocracy of Rome, at the various periods of her history; the secluded and dignified matron, employed in household duties, and educating with severe discipline, for the military and civil service of the state, her future consuls and dictators; the gorgeous luxury, the almost incredible profligacy, of the later days of the republic and of the empire, the Julias and Messalinas, so darkly coloured by the satirists of the times; the active charity and the stern austerities of the Paulas and Eustochiums of the present period. It was not, in general, the severe and lofty Roman matron of the age of Roman virtue whom Christianity induced to abandon her domestic duties, and that highest of all duties to her country, the bringing up of noble and virtuous citizens; it was the

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Roman maiden who embraced virginity:—"Quæ * * prima Romanæ urbis virgo nobilis esse cœpisti." He says, however, of Marcella,—"Nulla eo tempore nobilium fœminarum noverat Romæ propositum monacharum, nec audebat propter rei novitatem, ignominiosum, ut tunc putabatur, et vile in populis, nomen assumere." Marcellæ Epitaph. p. 780.

* In Jerome's larger interpretation of Solomon's Song (adv. Jovin. p. 171.) is a very curious and whimsical passage, alluding to the Saviour as the spouse. There is one sentence, however, in the letter to Eustochium, so blasphemously indecent that it must not be quoted even in Latin. p. 38.

BOOK III.

soft, and at the same time, the savage female, who united the incongruous, but too frequently reconciled, vices of sensuality and cruelty; the female, whom the facility of divorce, if she abstained from less lawful indulgence, enabled to gratify in a more decent manner her inconstant passions; who had been inured from her most tender age, not merely to theatrical shows of questionable modesty, but to the bloody scenes of the arena, giving the signal perhaps with her own delicate hand for the mortal blow to the exhausted gladiator. We behold with wonder, not unmixed with admiration, women of the same race and city either forswearing from their earliest youth all intercourse with men, or preserving the state of widowhood with irreproachable dignity; devoting their wealth to the foundation of hospitals, and their time to religious duties and active benevolence. These monastic sentiments were carried to that excess which seemed inseparable from the Roman character. At twelve years old, the young Asella devoted herself to God; from that time she had never conversed with a man; her knees were as hard as a camel's, by constant genuflexion and prayer.* Paula, the fervent disciple of Jerome, after devoting the wealth of an ancient and opulent house to charitable uses†, to the

Paula.

* Hieronym. Epist. xxi.

† Jerome thus describes the charity of Paula:—Quid ego referam, amplæ et nobilis domus, et quondam opulentissimæ, omnes pæne divitias in pauperes erogatas. Quid in cunctos clementissimum animum, et bonitatem etiam in eos quos nunquam viderat, evagantem. Quis inopum moriens, non illius vestimentis obvolutus est? Quis clinicorum non ejus facultatibus sustentatus est? Quos curiosissimè totâ urbe perquirens, damnum putabat, si quis debilis et esuriens cibo sustentaretur alterius. *Spoliabat*

impoverishing of her own children, deserted her family. Her infant son and her marriageable daughter watched, with entreating looks, her departure; she did not even turn her head away to hide her maternal tears, but lifted up her unmoistened eyes to heaven, and continued her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Jerome celebrates this sacrifice of the holiest charities of life as the height of female religious heroism.*

Controversies of Jerome.

The vehement and haughty temper of Jerome was not softened by his monastic austerities, nor humbled by the severe proscription of the gentler affections. His life, in the capital and the desert, was one long warfare. After the death of his friend and protector, Damasus, the growing hostility of the clergy, notwithstanding the attachment of his disciples, ren-

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filios, et inter objurgantes propinquos, majorem se eis hæreditatem, Christi misericordiam dimittere loquebatur. Epitaph. Paulæ, p. 671. At her death, Jerome relates, with great pride, that she did not leave a penny to her daughter, but a load of debts (magnum æs alienum).

* It is a passage of considerable beauty:—Descendit ad portum, fratre, cognatis, affinibus, et (quod his majus est) liberis prosequentibus, et clementissimam matrem pietate vincere cupientibus. Jam carbasa tendebantur, et remorum ductu navis in altum protrahebatur. Parvus Toxotius supplices manus tendebat in littora. Rufina, jam nubilis, ut suas expectaret nuptias, tacens fletibus obsecrabat, et tamen illa siccos ad cœlum oculos, pietatem in filios, pietate in Deum superans nesciebat se matrem ut Christi probaret ancillam. * * Hoc contra jura naturæ plena fides patiebatur, imo gaudens animus appetebat. Epitaph. Paulæ 672.

This was her epitaph:—

Aspicis angustum precisâ rupe sepulcrum?
Hospitium Paulæ est, cœlestia regna tenentis.
Fratrem, cognatos, Romam, patriamque relinquens,
Divitias, sobolem, Bethlehemite conditur antro.
Hic præsepe tuum, Christe, atque hic mystica Magi
Munera portantes, hominique, Deoque dedere.

BOOK III.

Retreat to Palestine.

dered his residence in Rome disagreeable. Nor was the peace of the monastic life his reward for his zealous exertions in its cause. He retired to Palestine, where he passed the rest of his days in religious studies, and in polemic disputes. Wherever any dissentient from the doctrine or the practice of the dominant Christianity ventured to express his opinions, Jerome launched the thunders of his interdict from his cell at Bethlehem. No one was more perpetually involved in controversy, or opposed with greater rancour of personal hostility, than this earnest advocate of unworldly religious seclusion. He was engaged in a vehement dispute with St. Augustine, on the difference between St. Peter and St. Paul. But his repose was most embittered by the acrimonious and obstinate contest with Rufinus, which was rather a personal than a polemic strife. In one controversy, Christendom acknowledged and hailed him as her champion. Jovinian and Vigilantius are involved in the dark list of heretics; but their error appears to have been that of unwisely attempting to stem the current of popular Christian opinion, rather than any departure from the important doctrines of Christianity. They were premature Protestants; they endeavoured, with vain and ill-timed efforts, to arrest the encroaching spirit of Monachism, which had now enslaved the whole of Christianity* ; they questioned the superior merit of celibacy ; they protested against the growing worship of relics.† Their effect upon the

Jovinian and Vigilantius

* Hieronym. adv. Vigilantium, p. 281.

† The observation of Fleury shows how mistimed was the at-

dominant sentiment of the times may be estimated by the language of wrath, bitterness, contempt, and abhorrence, with which Jerome assails these bold men, who thus presumed to encounter the spirit of their age. The four points of Jovinian's heresy, were, —1st, that virgins had no higher merit, unless superior in their good works, than widows and married women ; 2d, that there was no distinction of meats; 3d, that those who had been baptized in full faith, would not be overcome by the Devil ; and 4th, that those who had preserved the grace of baptism would meet with an equal reward in heaven. This last clause was perhaps a corollary from the first, as the panegyrists of virginity uniformly claimed a higher place in heaven for the immaculate than for those who had been polluted by marriage. To those doctrines Vigilantius added, if possible, more hated tenets. He condemned the respect paid to the martyrs and their relics ; he questioned the miracles performed at their tombs ; he condemned the lighting lamps before them as a Pagan superstition ; he rejected the intercession of the saints ; he blamed the custom of sending alms to Jerusalem, and the selling all property to give it to the poor ;

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tempt of Vigilantius to return to the simpler Christianity of former days :—"On ne voit pas que l'hérésie (de Vigilance), ait eu de suite ; ni qu'on ait eu besoin d'aucun concile pour la condamner tant elle étoit contraire a la tradition de l'Eglise Universelle." Tom. v. p. 278.

I have purposely, lest I should overstrain the *Protestantism* of these remarkable men, taken this view of their tenets from Fleury, perhaps the fairest and most dispassionate writer of his church. Tom. iv. p. 602. ; tom. v. p. 275.

BOOK III.

he asserted that it was better to keep it and distribute its revenues in charity ; he protested against the whole monastic life, as interfering with the duty of a Christian to his neighbour. These doctrines were not without their followers ; the resentment of Jerome was embittered by their effect on some of the noble ladies of Rome, who began to fall off to marriage. Even some bishops embraced the doctrines of Vigilantius, and asserting that the high professions of continence led the way to debauchery, refused to ordain unmarried deacons.

The tone of Jerome's indignant writings against those new heretics is that of a man suddenly arrested in his triumphant career by some utterly unexpected opposition ; his resentment at being thus crossed is mingled with a kind of wonder that men should exist who could entertain such strange and daring tenets. The length, it might be said the prolixity, to which he draws out his answer to Jovinian, seems rather the outpouring of his wrath and his learning, than as if he considered it necessary to refute such obvious errors. Throughout it is the master condescending to teach, not the adversary to argue. He fairly overwhelms him with a mass of scripture, and of classical learning : at one time he pours out a flood of allegorical interpretations of the scripture ; he then confounds him with a clever passage from Theophrastus on the miseries of marriage. Even the friends of Jerome, the zealous Pammachius himself, were offended by the fierceness of his first invective

against Jovinian*, and his contemptuous disparagement of marriage. The injustice of his personal charges are refuted by the more temperate statements of Augustine and by his own admissions.† He was obliged, in his apology, to mitigate his vehemence, and reluctantly to fall into a milder strain; but even the Apology has something of the severe and contemptuous tone of an orator who is speaking on the popular side, with his audience already in his favour.

Vigilantius.

But his language to Jovinian is sober, dispassionate, and argumentative, in comparison with that to Vigilantius. He describes all the monsters ever invented by poetic imagination, the centaurs, the leviathan, the Nemean lion, Cacus, Geryon. Gaul, by her one monster, Vigilantius‡, had sur-

* Indignamini mihi, quod Jovinianum non docuerim, sed vicerim. Imo indignantur mihi qui illum anathematizatum dolent. Apolog. p. 236.

† Jerome admits that Jovinian did not assert the privilege which he vindicated; he remained a monk, though Jerome highly colours his luxurious habits. After his coarse tunic and *bare* feet, and food of bread and water, he has betaken himself to white garments, sweetened wine, and highly dressed meats: to the sauces of an Apicius or a Paxamus, to baths, and shampooings (fricticulæ,—the Benedictines translate this fritter shops), and cooks' shops, it is manifest that he prefers earth to heaven, vice to virtue, his belly to Christ, and thinks his rubicund colour (purpuram coloris ejus) the kingdom of heaven. Yet this handsome, this corpulent, smooth monk, always goes in white like a bridegroom: let him marry a wife to prove the equal value of virginity and marriage; but if he will not take a wife, though he is against us in his words, his actions are for us. He afterwards says,—Ille Romanæ ecclesiæ auctoritate damnatus inter fluviales aves, et carnes suillas, non tam emisit animam quam eructavit. p. 183.

‡ His brief sketch of the enormities of Vigilantius is as follows: — Qui immundo spiritu pugnat contra Christi spiritum, et martyrum negat sepulcra esse veneranda; damnandas dicit esse vigilias; nunquam nisi in Pascha Alleluia cantandum: continentiam hæresim, pudicitiam libidinis seminarium.

BOOK III.

passed all the pernicious and portentous horrors of other regions. "Why do I fly to the desert?—That I may not see or hear thee; that I may no longer be moved by thy madness, nor be provoked to war by thee; lest the eye of a harlot should captivate me, and a beautiful form seduce me to unlawful love." But his great and conclusive argument in favour of reverence for the dust of martyrs (that little dust which, covered with a precious veil, Vigilantius presumed to think but dust) is universal authority. "Was the Emperor Constantine sacrilegious, who transported the relics of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy to Constantinople, at whose presence the devils (such devils as inhabit the wretched Vigilantius) roar, and are confounded? or the Emperor Arcadius, who translated the bones of the holy Samuel to Thrace? Are all the bishops sacrilegious who enshrined these precious remains in silk, as a vessel of gold; and all the people who met them, and received them as it were the living prophet? Is the Bishop of Rome, who offers sacrifice on the altar under which are the venerable bones (the vile dust, would Vigilantius say?) of Peter and Paul; and not the bishop of one city alone, but the bishops of all the cities in the world who reverence these relics, around which the souls of the martyrs are constantly hovering to hear the prayers of the supplicant?"

The great work of Jerome, the authoritative Latin version of the scriptures, will demand our attention, as one of the primary elements of Christian

literature, a subject which must form one most important branch of our inquiry into the extent and nature of the general revolution in the history of mankind, brought about by the complete establishment of Christianity.

CHAP. XI.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROMAN EMPIRE UNDER CHRISTIANITY.

General survey of the change effected by Christianity.

THE period is now arrived when we may survey the total change in the habits and manners, as well as in the sentiments and opinions, of mankind, effected by the dominance of the new faith. Christianity is now the mistress of the Roman world; on every side the struggles of Paganism become more feeble; it seems resigned to its fate, or rather only hopes, by a feigned allegiance, and a simulation of the forms and language of Christianity, to be permitted to drag on a precarious and inglorious existence. The Christians are now no longer a separate people, founding and maintaining their small independent republics, fenced in by marked peculiarities of habits and manners from the rest of society; they have become to all outward appearance *the people;* the general manners of the world may be contemplated as the manners of Christendom. The monks, and in some respects the clergy, have, as it were, taken the place of the Christians as a separate and distinct body of men; the latter in a great degree, the former altogether, differing from the prevalent usages in their modes of life, and abstaining from the common pursuits and avocations of society. The Christian writers, there-

BOOK IV.

Sources of information.

fore, become our leading, almost our only, authorities for the general habits and manners of mankind (for the notice of such matters in the Heathen writers are few and casual), except the Theodosian code.

Theodosian code.

This indeed is of great value as a record of manners, as well as a history of legislation; for that which demands the prohibition of the law, or is in any way of sufficient importance to require the notice of the legislature, may be considered as a prevalent custom: particularly as the Theodosian code is not a system of abstract and general law, but the register of the successive edicts of the Emperors, who were continually supplying, by their arbitrary acts, the deficiencies of the existing statutes, or as new cases arose, adapting those statutes to temporary exigences.

Christian writers.

But the Christian preachers are the great painters of Roman manners; Chrysostom of the East, more particularly of Constantinople; Jerome, and though much less copiously, Ambrose and Augustine, of Roman Christendom. Considerable allowance must, of course, be made in all these statements for oratorical vehemence; much more for the ascetic habits of the writers, particularly of Chrysostom, who maintained, and would have exacted, the rigid austerity of the desert in the midst of a luxurious capital. Nor must the general morality of the times be estimated from their writings without considerable discretion. It is the office of the preacher, though with a different design, yet with something of the manner of the satirist, to select the vices of mankind for his animadversion, and to dwell

CHAP. I.

with far less force on the silent and unpretending virtues. There might be, and probably was, an under-current of quiet Christian piety and gentleness, and domestic happiness, which would not arrest the notice of the preacher, who was denouncing the common pride and luxury; or if kindling into accents of praise, enlarging on the austere self-denial of the anchorite, or the more shining virtues of the saint.

Christianity disturbed not the actual relations of society, it interfered in no way with the existing gradations of rank; though, as we shall see, it introduced a new order of functionaries, — what may be considered from the estimation in which they were held, a new aristocracy, — it left all the old official dignitaries in possession of their distinctions. With the great vital distinction between the freeman and the slave, as yet it made no difference.* It broke down none of the barriers which separated this race of men from the common rights of human kind; and in no degree legally brought up this Pariah caste of antiquity to the common level of the human race.

Slavery.

In the new relation established between mankind and the Supreme Being, the slave was fully participant; he shared in the redemption through Christ, he might receive all the spiritual blessings, and enjoy all the immortalising hopes of the believer; he might be dismissed from his death-bed to heaven by the absolving voice of the priest; and besides this

* The laws of Justinian, it must be remembered, are beyond this period.

BOOK IV.

inestimable consolation in misery and degradation, this religious equality, at least with the religious part of the community, could not fail to elevate his condition, and to strengthen that claim to the sympathies of mankind which were enforced by Christian humanity. The axiom of Clement of Alexandria that by the common law of Christian charity, we were to act to them as we would be acted by, because they were men*, though perhaps it might have been uttered with equal strength of language by some of the better philosophers, spoke with far more general acceptance to the human heart. The manumission, which was permitted by Constantine to take place in the Church, must likewise have tended indirectly to connect freedom with Christianity.†

Still, down to the time of Justinian, the inexorable law, which, as to their treatment, had already been wisely tempered by the Heathen Emperors, as to their *rights*, pronounced the same harsh and imperious sentence. It beheld them as an inferior class of human beings; their life was placed but partially under the protection of the law. If they died under a punishment of extraordinary cruelty, the master was guilty of homicide; if under more moderate application of the scourge, or any other infliction, the master was not accountable for their death.‡ While it refused to protect, the law inflicted on the slave punishments disproportionate to those of the freeman. If he accused his master for

* Clemens Alex. Pædagog. iii. 12.

† See Blair on Slavery, p. 288.

‡ Cod. Theodos. ix. 12. 1.

any crime, except high treason, he was to be burned * ; if free women married slaves, they sank to the abject state of their husbands, and forfeited their rights as free women†; if a free woman intrigued with a slave, she was capitally punished, the slave was burned.‡ CHAP. I.

The possession of slaves was in no degree limited by law. It was condemned as a mark of inordinate luxury, but by no means as in itself contrary to Christian justice or equity.§

On the pomp and magnificence of the court, Christianity either did not aspire, or despaired of enforcing moderation or respect for the common dignity of mankind. The manners of the East, as the Emperor took up his residence in Constantinople, were too strong for the religion. With the first Christian Emperor commenced that Oriental ceremonial, which it might almost seem, that, rebuked by the old liberties of Rome, the imperial despot would not assume till he had founded another capital; or at least, if the first groundwork of this Eastern pomp was laid by Dioclesian, Rome had already been deserted, and was not insulted by the open degradation of the first men in the empire to the language, attitudes, and titles of servitude. Manners of the court.

The eunuchs, who, however admitted in solitary instances to the confidence or favour of the earlier Government of the eunuchs.

* Cod. Theodos. ix. 6. 2.
† Ibid. iv. 9. 1. 2. 3.
‡ Ibid. ix. 11. 1.
§ Clemens. Alex. Pædagog. iii. 12. It is curious to compare this passage of Clement with the beautiful essay of Seneca. See likewise Chrysostom almost *passim*. Some had 2000 or 3000. t. vii. p. 633.

BOOK IV.

Emperors, had never formed a party, or handed down to each other the successive administrations, now ruled in almost uncontested sovereignty, and except in some rare instances, seemed determined not to incur, without deserving, the antipathy and contempt of mankind. The luxury and prodigality of the court equalled its pomp and its servility. The parsimonious reformation introduced by Julian may exaggerate in its contemptuous expressions, the thousand cooks, the thousand barbers, and more than a thousand cupbearers, with the host of eunuchs and drones of every description who lived at the charge of the Emperor Constantius.* The character of Theodosius gave an imposing dignity to his resumption of that magnificence, of which Julian, not without affectation, had displayed his disdain. The Heathen writers, perhaps with the design of contrasting Theodosius with the severer Julian, who are the representatives, or at least, each the pride of the opposing parties, describe the former as immoderately indulging in the pleasures of the table, and of re-enlisting in the imperial service a countless multitude of cooks and other attendants on the splendour and indulgence of the court.† That which in Theodosius was the relaxation or the reward for military services, and the cares and agitations of an active administration, degenerated with his feeble sons into indolent and effeminate luxury. The head of the empire became a secluded Asiatic despot. When, on rare occasions, Arcadius condescended to reveal to the

The Emperor.

* Libanius, Epitaph. Julian. p. 565. † Zosimus, iv. 28.

public the majesty of the sovereign, he was preceded by a vast multitude of attendants, dukes, tribunes, civil and military officers, their horses glittering with golden ornaments, with shields of gold, set with precious stones, and golden lances. They proclaimed the coming of the Emperor, and commanded the ignoble crowd to clear the streets before him.* The Emperor stood or reclined on a gorgeous chariot surrounded by his immediate attendants distinguished by shields with golden bosses set round with golden eyes, and drawn by white mules with gilded trappings; the chariot was set with precious stones, and golden fans vibrated with the movement, and cooled the air. The multitude contemplated at a distance the snow-white cushions, the silken carpets with dragons enwoven upon them in rich colours. Those who were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of the Emperor beheld his ears loaded with golden rings, his arms with golden chains, his diadem set with gems of all hues, his purple robes, which with the diadem, were reserved for the Emperor, in all their sutures embroidered with precious stones. The wondering people, on their return to their homes, could talk of nothing but the splendour of the spectacle, the robes, the mules, the carpets, the size and splendour of the jewels. On his return to the palace, the Emperor walked on gold; ships were employed with the ex-

* Montfaucon, in an essay in the last volume of the works of Chrysostom, and in the twelfth vol. of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions; and Muller, in his treatise de Genio, Moribus, et Luxu Ævi Theodosiani, have collected the principal features of this picture, chiefly from Chrysostom.

BOOK IV.

press purpose of bringing gold dust* from remote provinces, which was strewn by the officious care of a host of attendants, so that the Emperor rarely set his foot on the bare pavement.

The aristocracy.

The official aristocracy, which had succeeded to the hereditary patriciate of Rome, reflected in more moderate splendour, and less unapproachable seclusion, the manners of the court. The chief civil offices were filled by men of ignoble birth, often eunuchs, who, by the prodigal display of their ill-acquired wealth, insulted the people, who admired, envied, and hated their arrogant state. The military officers, in the splendour of their trappings and accoutrements, vied with the gorgeousness of the court favourites; and even the barbarians, who began to force their way by their valour to these posts, in the capital, caught the infection of luxury and pomp. As in all despotisms, especially in the East, there was a rapid rise and fall of unworthy favourites, whose vices, exactions, and oppressions, were unsparingly laid open by hostile writers, directly they had lost the protecting favour of the court. Men then found out that the enormous wealth, the splendour, the voluptuousness, in which an Eutropius or a Rufinus had indulged, had been obtained by the sale of appointments, by vast bribes from provincial governors, by confiscations, and every abuse of inordinate power.†

* Χρύσιτιν. See Muller, p. 10.

† Hic Asiam villâ pactus regit; ille redemit
Conjugis ornatu Syriam; dolet ille paternâ
Bithynos mutâsse domo. Suffixa patenti
Vestibulo pretiis distinguit regula gentes.
Claud. in Eutrop. i. 199.

CHAP. I

Christianity had not the power to elevate despotism into a wise and beneficent rule, nor to dignify its inseparable consequence, court favouritism; yet after all, feeble and contemptible as are many of the Christian Emperors, pusillanimous even in their vices; odious as was the tyranny of their ministers; they may bear no unfavourable comparison with the Heathen Emperors of Rome. Human nature is not so outraged; our belief in the possible depravity of man is not so severely tried, as by the monstrous vices and cruelties of a Tiberius, a Caligula, or a Nero. Theodora, even, if we credit the malignant satire of Procopius, maintained some decency upon the throne. The superstitions of the Emperors debased Christianity; the Christian bishop was degraded by being obliged at times to owe his promotion to an eunuch or a favourite; yet even the most servile and intriguing of the hierarchy could not be entirely forgetful of their high mission; there was still a kind of moral repugnance, inseparable from the character they bore, which kept them above the general debasement.

Manners of the aristocracy.

The aristocratical life, at this period, seems to have been characterised by gorgeous magnificence without grandeur, inordinate luxury without refinement, the pomp and prodigality of a high state

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clientes
Fallit, et ambitos à principe vendit honores.
* * * *
Congestæ cumulantur opes, orbisque rapinas
Accipit una domus. Populi servire coacti
Plenaque privato succumbunt oppida regno.
In Rufin. i. 179—193.

BOOK IV.

of civilisation with none of its ennobling or humanising effects. The walls of the palaces were lined with marbles of all colours, crowded with statues of inferior workmanship, mosaics, of which the merit consisted in the arrangement of the stones; the cost, rather than the beauty or elegance, was the test of excellence, and the object of admiration. They were surrounded with hosts of parasites or servants. "You reckon up," Chrysostom thus addresses a patrician, "so many acres of land, ten or twenty palaces, as many baths, a thousand or two thousand slaves, chariots plated with silver or overlaid with gold."*

Females.

Their banquets were merely sumptuous, without social grace or elegance. The dress of the females, the fondness for false hair, sometimes wrought up to an enormous height, and especially affecting the golden dye, and for paint, from which irresistible propensities they were not to be estranged even by religion, excite the stern animadversion of the ascetic Christian teacher. "What business have rouge and paint on a Christian cheek? Who can weep for her sins when her tears wash her face bare and mark furrows on her skin? With what trust can faces be lifted up towards heaven, which the Maker cannot recognise as his workmanship?"† Their necks, heads, arms, and fingers, were loaded with golden chains and rings; their persons breathed precious odours, their dresses were of gold stuff and silk; and in this attire they ventured to enter

* T. vii. p. 533.

† Hieronym. Epist. 54. Compare Epist. 19. vol. i. p. 284.

the church. Some of the wealthier Christian matrons gave a religious air to their vanity, while the more profane wore their thin silken dresses embroidered with hunting-pieces, wild beasts, or any other fanciful device; the more pious had the miracles of Christ, the marriage in Cana of Galilee, or the paralytic carrying his bed. In vain the preachers urged that it would be better to emulate these acts of charity and love, than to wear them on their garments.*

It might indeed be supposed that Christianity, by the extinction of that feeling for the beauty, grandeur, and harmony of outward form, which was a part of the religion of Greece, and was enforced by her purer and loftier philosophy, may have contributed to this total depravation of the taste. Those who had lost the finer feeling for the pure and noble in art and in social life, would throw themselves into the gorgeous, the sumptuous, and the extravagant. But it was rather the Roman character than the influence of Christianity which was thus fatal to the refinements of life. The degeneracy of taste was almost complete before the predominance of the new religion. The manners of ancient Rome had descended from the earlier empire†, and the manners of Constantinople were in most respects an elaborate imitation of those of Rome.

* Muller, p. 112. There are several statutes prohibiting the use of gold brocade or dresses of silk in the Theodosian Code. x. tit. 20. Other statutes regulate the dress in Rome. xiv. 10. 1.

† Compare the description of the manners and habits of the Roman nobles in Ammianus Marcellinus, so well transferred into English in the 31st chapter of Gibbon, vol. v. p. 258—268.

The provincial cities, according to the national character, imitated the old and new Rome; and in all, no doubt the nobility, or the higher order, were of the same character and habits.

On the appointment to the provincial governments, and the high civil offices of the empire, Christianity at this time exercised by no means a commanding, certainly no exclusive, influence. Either superior merit, or court intrigue, or favour, bestowed civil offices with impartial hand on Christian and Pagan. The Rufinus or the Eutropius cared little whether the bribe was offered by a worshipper in the church or in the temple. The Heathen Themistius was appointed prefect of Constantinople by the intolerant Theodosius; Prætextatus and Symmachus held the highest civil functions in Rome. The prefect who was so obstinate an enemy to Chrysostom was Optatus, a Pagan. At a later period, as we have observed, a statue was raised to the Heathen poet Merobaudes.

But, besides the officers of the imperial government, of the provinces and the municipalities, there now appeared a new order of functionaries, with recognised, if undefined powers, the religious magistrates of the religious community. In this magisterial character, the new hierarchy differed from the ancient priesthoods, at least of Greece and Rome. In Greece, they were merely the officiating dignitaries in the religious ceremonial; in Rome, the pontifical was attached to, and in effect merged in, the important civil function. But

Christianity had its own distinct and separate aristocracy, which not merely officiated in the church, but ruled the public mind, and mingled itself with the various affairs of life, far beyond this narrow sphere of religious ministration.

The Christian hierarchy was completely organised and established in the minds of men before the great revolutions which, under Constantine, legalised Christianity, and, under Theodosius and his successors, identified the Church and State. The strength of the sacerdotal power was consolidated before it came into inevitable collision, or had to dispute its indefinable limits with the civil authority. Mankind was now submitted to a double dominion, the civil supremacy of the Emperor and his subordinate magistrates, and that of the Bishop with his inferior priesthood.

Gradual developement of the hierarchical power.

Up to the establishment of Christianity, the clerical order had been the sole magistracy of the new communities. But it is not alone from the scantiness of authentic documents concerning the earliest Christian history, but from the inevitable nature of things, that the developement of the hierarchical power, as has already been partially shown*, was gradual and untraceable. In the infant Christian community, we have seen that the chief teacher and the ruler, almost immediately, if not immediately, became the same person. It was not so much that he was formally invested in

* Book ii. ch. 4.

BOOK IV.

authority, as that his advice, his guidance, his control, were sought on all occasions with timid diffidence, and obeyed with unhesitating submission. In the Christian, if it may be so said, the civil was merged in the religious being; he abandoned willingly his rights as a citizen, almost as a man, his independence of thought and action, in order to be taught conformity to the new doctrines which he had embraced, and the new rule of life to which he had submitted himself. Community of sentiment, rather than any strict federal compact, was the primary bond of the Christian republic; and this general sentiment, even prior, perhaps, to any formal nomination or ordination, designated the heads and the subordinate rulers, the Bishops, the Presbyters, and the Deacons; and therefore, where all agreed, there was no question in whom resided the right of conferring the title.*

The simple ceremonial of "laying on of hands," which dedicated the individual for his especial function, ratified and gave its religious character to this popular election which took place by a kind of silent acclamation; and without this sacred commission by the bishop, no one, from the earliest times of which we have any record, presumed, it should seem, to invest himself in the sacred office.† The civil and

* The growth of the Christian hierarchy, and the general constitution of the Church, are developed with learning, candour, and moderation, by Planck, in his Geschichte der Christlich-Kirchlichen Verfassung. Hanover, 1803.

† Gradually the admission to orders became a subject not merely of ecclesiastical, but of civil regu-

religious power of the hierarchy grew up side by side, or intertwined with each other, by the same spontaneous vital energy. Every thing in the primary formation of the communities tended to increase the power of their ecclesiastical superiors. The investiture of the blended teacher and ruler in a sacred, and at length in a sacerdotal character, the rigid separation of this sacred order from the mass of the believers, could not but arise out of the unavoidable developement of the religion. It was not their pride or ambition that withdrew them, but the reverence of the people which enshrined them in a separate sphere: they did not usurp or even assume their power and authority; it was heaped upon them by the undoubting and prodigal confidence of the community. The hopes and fears of men would have forced this honour upon them, had they been humbly reluctant to accept it. Man, in his state of religious excitement, imperiously required some authorised interpreters of those mysterious revelations from heaven which he could read himself but imperfectly and obscurely; he felt the pressing necessity of a spiritual guide. The

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lation. It has been observed that the decurion was prohibited from taking orders in order to obtain exemption from the duties of his station. Cod. Theod. xii. 1. 49. No slave, curialis, officer of the court, public debtor, procurator, or collector of the purple dye (murilegulus), or one involved in business, might be ordained, or, if ordained, might be reclaimed to his former state. Cod. Theod. ix. 45. 3. This was a law of the close of the fourth century, A. D. 398. The Council of Illiberis had made a restriction that no freedman, whose patron was a Gentile, could be ordained; he was still too much under control. Can. lxxx.

privileges and distinctions of the clergy, so far from being aggressions on his religious independence, were solemn responsibilities undertaken for the general benefit. The Christian commonalty, according to the general sentiment, could not have existed without them, nor could such necessary but grave functions be entrusted to casual or common hands. No individual felt himself safe, except under their superintendence. Their sole right of entering the sanctuary arose as much out of the awe of the people as their own self-invested holiness of character. The trembling veneration for the mysteries of the sacrament must by no means be considered as an artifice to exalt themselves as the sole guardians and depositaries of these blessings; it was the genuine expression of their own profoundest feelings. If they had not assumed the keys of heaven and hell; if they had not appeared legitimately to possess the power of pronouncing the eternal destiny of man, to suspend or excommunicate from those Christian privileges which were inseparably connected in Christian belief with the eternal sentence, or to absolve and readmit into the pale of the Church and of salvation,—among the mass of believers, the uncertainty, the terror, the agony of minds fully impressed with the conviction of their immortality, and yearning by every means to obtain the assurance of pardon and peace, with heaven and hell constantly before their eyes, and agitating their inmost being, would have been almost insupportable. However they might exag-

gerate their powers, they could not extend them beyond the ready acquiescence of the people. They could not possess the power of absolving without that of condemning; and men were content to brave the terrors of the gloomier award, for the indescribable consolations and confidence in their brighter and more ennobling promises.

The change in the relative position of Christianity to the rest of the world tended to the advancement of the hierarchy. At first there was no necessity to guard the admission into the society with rigid or suspicious jealousy, since the profession of Christianity in the face of a hostile world was in itself almost a sufficient test of sincerity. Expulsion from the society, or a temporary exclusion from its privileges, which afterwards grew into the awful forms of interdict or excommunication, must have been extremely rare or unnecessary *, since he who could not endure the discipline, or who doubted again the doctrines of Christianity, had nothing to do but to abandon a despised sect and revert to the freedom of the world. The older and more numerous the community, severer regulations were requisite for the admission of members, the maintenance of order, of unity in doctrine,

* The case in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. v. 5.), which seems to have been the first of forcible expulsion, was obviously an act of *Apostolic* authority. This, it is probable, was a Jewish convert; and these persons stood in a peculiar position; they would be ashamed, or would not be permitted, to return into the bosom of the Jewish community, which they had abandoned, and, if expelled from the Christian Church, would be complete outcasts. Not so the Heathen apostate, who might one day leave, and the next return, to his old religion, with all its advantages.

BOOK IV.

Expulsion or excommunication.

and propriety of conduct, as well as for the ejection of unworthy disciples. As men began to be Christians, not from personal conviction, but from hereditary descent, as children of Christian parents; as the Church was filled with doubtful converts, some from the love of novelty, others, when they incurred less danger and obloquy, from less sincere faith; some, no doubt, of the base and profligate, from the desire of partaking in the well-known charity of the Christians to their poorer brethren; many would become Christians, having just strength of mind enough to embrace its tenets, but not to act up to its duties; a more severe investigation, therefore, became necessary for admission into the society, a more summary authority for the expulsion of improper members.* These powers naturally devolved on the heads of the community, who had either originally possessed, and transmitted by regularly appointed descent, or held by general consent, the exclusive administration of the religious rites, the sacraments, which were the federal bonds of the community. Their strictly civil functions became likewise more extensive and important.

* It is curious to find that both ecclesiastical and civil laws against apostasy were constantly necessary. The Council of Elvira readmits an apostate to communion, who has not worshipped idols, after ten years' penance. The laws of Gratian and Theodosius, and even of Arcadius and Valentinian III., speak a more menacing language: the Christian who has become a Pagan forfeits the right of bequeathing by will—his will is null and void. Cod. Theod. xvi. 7. 1. 22. A law of Valentinian II. inflicts the same penalty (only with some limitation) on apostates to Judaism or Manicheism. The laws of Arcadius and Valentinian III. prove, by the severity of their prohibitions, not only that cases of apostasy took place, but that sacrifices were still frequently offered. Cod. Theodos. xvi. tit. de Apostatis.

CHAP. I.

Increase in their civil influence.

All legal disputes had, from the first, been submitted to the religious magistracy, not as interpreters of the laws of the empire, but as best acquainted with the higher principles of natural justice and Christian equity. The religious heads of the communities were the supreme and universally recognised arbiters in all the transactions of life. When the magistrate became likewise a Christian, and the two communities were blended into one, considerable difficulty could not but arise, as we shall hereafter see, in the limits of their respective jurisdictions.

But the magisterial or ruling part of the ecclesiastical function became thus more and more relatively important; government gradually became an affair of asserted superiority on one hand, of exacted submission on the other; but still the general voice would long be in favour of the constituted authorities. The episcopal power would be a mild, a constitutional, an unoppresssive, and therefore unquestioned and unlimited sovereignty; for, in truth, in the earlier period, what was the bishop, and in a subordinate degree, the presbyter, or even the deacon? — He was the religious superior, elected by general acclamation, or at least, by general consent, as commanding that station by his unrivalled religious qualifications; he was solemnly invested in his office by a religious ceremony; he was the supreme arbiter in such civil matters as occurred among the members of the body, and thus the conservator of peace; he was the censor of morals, the minister in holy rites,

BOOK IV.

The bishop in the early community.

the instructor in the doctrines of the faith, the adviser in all scruples, the consoler in all sorrows; he was the champion of the truth, in the hour of trial the first victim of persecution, the designated martyr. Of a being so sanctified, so ennobled to the thought, what jealous suspicion would arise, what power would be withholden from one whose commission would seem ratified by the Holy Spirit of God. Power might generate ambition, distinction might be attended by pride, but the transition would not be perceived by the dazzled sight of respect, of reverence, of veneration, and of love.

Dissensions in the Church cause of increase of sacerdotal power.

Above all, diversities of religious opinion would tend to increase the influence and the power of those who held the religious supremacy. It has been said, not without some authority, that the establishment of episcopacy in the Apostolic times arose for the control of the differences with the Judaising converts.* The multitude of believers would take refuge under authority from the doubts and perplexities thus cast among them; they would be grateful to men who would think for them, and in whom their confidence might seem to be justified by their station; a formulary of faith for such persons would be the most acceptable boon to the Christian society. This would be more particularly the case when, as in the Asiatic communities, they were not merely slight and unimportant, but vital points of difference. The

* No doubt this kind of constant and of natural appeal to the supreme religious functionary must have materially tended to strengthen and confirm this power. See vol. ii. page 70. and note.

Gnosticism, which the bishops of Asia Minor and of Syria had to combat, was not a Christian sect or heresy, but another religion, although speaking in some degree Christian language. The justifiable alarm of these dangerous encroachments would induce the teachers and governors to assume a loftier and more dictatorial tone; those untainted by the new opinions would vindicate and applaud their acknowledged champions and defenders. Hence we account for the strong language in the Epistles of Ignatius, which appears to claim the extraordinary rank of actual representatives, not merely of the Apostles, but of Christ himself, for the bishops, precisely in this character, as maintainers of the true Christian doctrine.* In the

* My own impression is decidedly in favour of the genuineness of these Epistles,—the shorter ones I mean — which are vindicated by Pearson; nor do I suspect that these passages, which are too frequent, and too much in the style and spirit of the whole, are later interpolations. Certainly the fact of the existence of two different copies of these Epistles throws doubt on the genuineness of both; but I receive them partly from an historical argument, which I have suggested, vol. ii. p. 151., partly from internal evidence. Some of their expressions, *e. g.*, "Be ye subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ" (ad Trall. c. 2.); "Follow your bishop as Jesus Christ the Father, the presbytery as the Apostles; reverence the deacons as the ordinance of God" (ad Smyrn. c. 8.); taken as detached sentences, and without regard to the figurative style and ardent manner of the writer, would seem so extraordinary a transition from the tone of the Apostles, as to throw still further doubts on the authenticity at least of these sentences. But it may be observed that in these strong expressions the object of the writer does not seem to be to raise the sacerdotal power, but rather to enforce Christian unity, with direct reference to these fatal differences of doctrine. In another passage he says, "Be ye subject to the bishop and to each other (τῳ ἐπισκόπῳ καὶ ἀλλήλοις), as Jesus Christ to the Father, and the Apostles to Christ, to the Father and to the Spirit."

I cannot indeed understand the inference that all the language or tenets of Christians who may have heard the Apostles are to be considered of Apostolic authority. Ignatius was a vehement and strongly figurative writer, very different in his tone, accor-

BOOK IV.

pseudo-Apostolic Constitutions, which belong probably to the latter end of the third century, this more than Apostolic authority is sternly and unhesitatingly asserted. * Thus, the separation between the clergy and laity continually widened; the teacher or ruler of the community became the dictator of doctrine, the successor, not of the bishop appointed by Apostolic authority†, or according to Apostolic usage, but the Apostle; and at length took on himself a sacerdotal name and dignity. A strong corporate spirit, which arises out of associations formed for the noblest as well as for the most unworthy objects, could not but actuate the hierarchical college which was formed in each diocese or each city by the bishop and more or less numerous presbyters and deacons. The control on the autocracy of the bishop, which was exercised by this senate of presbyters, without whom he rarely acted, tended to strengthen, rather

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ding to my judgment, to the Apostolic writings. His eager desire for martyrdom, his deprecating the interference of the Roman Christians in his behalf, is remarkably at variance with the sober dignity with which the Apostles did not seek, but submitted to death. That which may have been high-wrought metaphor in Ignatius, is repeated by the author of the Apostolic Constitutions, without reserve or limitation. This, I think, may be fairly taken as indicative of the language prevalent at the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century, — *ὑμῖν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος εἷς Θεὸν τετιμήσθω.* The bishop is to be honoured as God. ii. 30. The language of Psalm lxxxi. "Ye are Gods," is applied to them: — they are as much greater than the king as the soul is superior to the body, — *στέργειν ὀφειλέτε ὡς πατέρα, — φοβεῖσθαι ὡς βασιλεα.*

* *Οὗτος ὑμῖν ἐπίγειος Θεὸς μετὰ Θεοῦ.* Lib. ii. c. 26.

† The full Apostolic authority was claimed for the bishops, I think, first distinctly, at a later period. See the letter from Firmilianus in Cyprian's works, Epist. lxxv. Potestas peccatorum remittendorum Apostolis data est * * et episcopis qui eis vicariâ ordinatione successerunt.

than to invalidate, the authority of the general body, in which all particular and adverse interests were absorbed in that of the clerical order. *

Language of the Old Testament.

The language of the Old Testament, which was received perhaps with greater readiness, from the contemptuous aversion in which it was held by the Gnostics, on this as on other subjects, gradually found its way into the Church. † But the strong and marked line between the ministerial or magisterial order (the clergy) and the inferior Christians, the people (the laity), had been drawn before the bishop became a pontiff (for the Heathen names were likewise used), the presbyters, the sacerdotal order, and the deacons, a class of men who shared in the indelible sanctity of the new priesthood. The common priesthood of all Christians, as distinguishing them by their innocent and dedicated character from the profane Heathen, asserted in the Epistle of St. Peter, was the only notion of the sacerdotal character at first admitted into the popular sentiment. ‡ The appellation of the sacerdotal order began to be metaphorically applied

Clergy and laity.

* Even Cyprian enforces his own authority by that of his concurrent College of Presbyters: — Quando à primordio episcopatûs mei statuerem, nihil sine consilio vestro, et cum consensu plebis, meâ privatim sententiâ gerere. Epist. v. In other passages he says, Cui rei non potui me solum judicem dare. He had acted, therefore, cum collegis meis, et cum plebe ipsâ universâ. Epist. xxviii.

† It is universally adopted in the Apostolic Constitutions. The crime of Korah is significantly adduced; tithes are mentioned, I believe, for the first time, ii. 25. Compare vi. 2.

‡ See the well known passage of Tertullian: — Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus? * * Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit ecclesiæ auctoritas. Tertullian evidently Montanises in this treatise, de Exhort. Castit. c. 7., yet seems to deliver these as maxims generally acknowledged.

BOOK IV.

to the Christian clergy*, but soon became real titles; and by the close of the third century, they were invested in the names and claimed the rights of the Levitical priesthood in the Jewish theocracy.† The Epistle of Cyprian to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, shows the height to which the episcopal power had aspired before the religion of Christ had become that of the Roman empire. The passages of the Old Testament, and even of the New, in which honour or deference are paid to the Hebrew pontificate, are recited in profuse detail; implicit obedience is demanded for the priest of God, who is the sole infallible judge or delegate of Christ.‡

Even if it had been possible that, in their state of high-wrought attachment and reverence for the teachers and guardians of their religion, any mistrust could have arisen in the more sagacious and far-sighted minds of the vast system of sacerdotal domination, of which they were thus laying the deep foundations in the Roman world, there was no recollection or tradition of any priestly tyranny from which they could take warning or imbibe

* We find the first appearance of this in the figurative Ignatius. Tertullian uses the term summi Sacerdotes.

† The passage in the Epistle of Clemens (ad Roman. c. 40.), in which the analogy of the ministerial offices of the Church with the priestly functions of the Jewish temple is distinctly developed, is rejected as an interpolation by all judicious and impartial scholars.

‡ See his 68th Epistle, in which he draws the analogy between the legitimate bishop and the sacerdos of the law, the irregularly elected and Corah, Dathan, and Abiram: — Neque enim aliunde hæreses obortæ sunt, aut nata sunt schismata, quam inde quod *sacerdoti Dei non obtemperatur*, nec unus in ecclesiâ ad tempus sacerdos, et ad tempus *Judex, vice Christi* cogitatus: cui si secundum magisteria divina obtemperaret fraternitas universa, nemo adversum sacerdotium collegium quicquam moverat. Ad Cornel., Epist. lv.

caution. These sacerdotal castes were obsolete or Oriental; the only one within their sphere of knowledge was that of the Magians in the hostile kingdom of Persia. In Greece, the priesthood had sunk into the neglected ministers of the deserted temples; their highest dignity was to preside over the amusements of the people. The Emperor had now at length disdainfully cast off the supreme pontificate of the Heathen world, which had long been a title, and nothing more. Even among the Jews, the rabbinical hierarchy, which had gained considerable strength, even during our Saviour's time, but after the fall of the temple, and the publication of the Talmuds, had assumed a complete despotism over the Jewish mind, was not a priesthood; the rabbins came promiscuously from all the tribes; their claims rested on learning and on knowledge of the traditions of the Fathers, not on Levitical descent.

Nor indeed could any danger be apparent, so long as the free voice of the community, guided by fervent piety, and rarely perverted by less worthy motives, summoned the wisest and the holiest to these important functions. The nomination to the sacred office experienced the same, more gradual, perhaps, but not less inevitable, change from the popular to the self-electing form. The acclamation of the united, and seldom, if ever, discordant voices of the presbyters and the people might be trusted with the appointment to the headship of a poor and devout community, whose utmost desire was to worship God, and to

BOOK IV.

Change in the mode of election.

fulfil their Christian duties in uninterrupted obscurity. But as the episcopate became an object of ambition or interest, the disturbing forces which operate on the justice and wisdom of popular elections could not but be called forth; and slowly the clergy, by example, by influence, by recommendation, by dictation, by usurpation, identified their acknowledged right of consecration for a particular office with that of appointment to it. This was one of their last triumphs. In the days of Cyprian, and towards the close of the third century, the people had the right of electing, or at least of rejecting, candidates for the priesthood.* In the latter half of the fourth century, the streets of Rome ran with blood in the contest of Damasus and Ursicinus, for the bishopric of Rome; both factions arrayed against each other the priests and the people who were their respective partisans.† Thus the clergy had become a distinct and recognised class in society, consecrated by a solemn ceremony, the imposition of hands, which, however, does not yet seem to have been indelible.‡ But

* Plebs ipsa maximè habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi. Epist. lxvii. Cornelius was testimonio cleri, ac suffragio populi electus. Compare Apostol. Constit. viii. 4. The Council of Laodicea (at the beginning of the fourth century) ordains that bishops are to be appointed by the metropolitans, and that the multitude, οἱ ὄχλοι, are not to designate persons for the priesthood.

† Ammianus Marcell. xxvii. 3. Hierom. in Chron. Compare Gibbon, vol. iv. 259.

‡ A canon of the Council of Chalcedon (can. 7.) prohibits the return of a spiritual person to the laity, and his assumption of lay offices in the state. See also Conc. Turon. i. c. 5. The laws of Justinian confiscate to the Church the property of any priest who has forsaken his orders. Cod. Just. i. tit. iii. 53.; Nov. v. 4. 125. c. 15. This seems to imply that the practice was not uncommon even at that late period. Compare Planck, vol. i. 399.

each church was still a separate and independent community; the bishop as its sovereign, the presbyters, and sometimes the deacons, as a kind of religious senate, conducted all its internal concerns. Great deference was paid from the first to the bishops of the more important sees: the number and wealth of the congregations would give them weight and dignity; and in general those prelates would be men of the highest character and attainments; yet promotion to a wealthier or more distinguished see was looked upon as betraying worldly ambition. The enemies of Eusebius, the Arian, or semi-Arian, bishop of Constantinople, bitterly taunted him with his elevation from the less important see of Nicomedia to the episcopate of the Eastern metropolis. This translation was prohibited by some councils.*

Metropolitan bishops.

The level of ecclesiastical or episcopal dignity gradually broke up; some bishops emerged into a higher rank; the single community over which the bishop originally presided grew into the aggregation of several communities, and formed a diocese; the metropolitan rose above the ordinary bishop, the patriarch assumed a rank above the metropolitan, till at length, in the regularly graduated scale, the primacy of Rome was asserted, and submitted to by the humble and obsequious West.

Formation of the diocese.

The diocese grew up in two ways, — 1. In the larger cities, the rapid increase of the Christians led necessarily to the formation of separate congre-

* Synod. Nic. can. 15.; Conc. Sard. c. 2.; Conc. Arel. 21.

BOOK IV.

gations, which, to a certain extent, required each its proper organisation, yet invariably remained subordinate to the single bishop. In Rome, towards the beginning of the fourth century, there were above forty churches, rendering allegiance to the prelate of the metropolis.

Chorepiscopi.

2. Christianity was first established in the towns and cities, and from each centre diffused itself with more or less success into the adjacent country. In some of these country congregations, bishops appear to have been established, yet these chorepiscopi, or rural bishops, maintained some subordination to the head of the mother church *; or where the converts were fewer, the rural Christians remained members of the mother church in the city.† In Africa, from the immense number of bishops, each community seems to have had its own superior; but this was peculiar to the province. In general, the churches adjacent to the towns or cities, either originally were, or became, the diocese of the city bishop; for as soon as Christianity became the religion of the state, the powers of the rural bishops were restricted, and the office at length was either abolished or fell into disuse.‡

The rank of the metropolitan bishop, who presided over a certain number of inferior bishops, and the convocation of ecclesiastical or episcopal

* See in Bingham, Ant. b. ii. c. 14., the controversy about the chorepiscopi or rural bishops.

† Justin Martyr speaks of the country converts: *παντῶν κατὰ πόλεις ἢ ἄγρους μενόντων, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ συνέλευσις γίνεται.* Apolog. i. 67.

‡ Concil. Antioch. can. 10.; Concil. Ancyr. c. 13.; Conc. Laod. c. 57.

CHAP. I.

synods, grew up apparently at the same time and from the same causes. The earliest authentic synods seem to have arisen out of the disputes about the time of observing Easter*; but before the middle of the third century, these occasional and extraordinary meetings of the clergy in certain districts took the form of provincial synods. These began in the Grecian provinces†, but extended throughout the Christian world. In some cases they seem to have been assemblies of bishops alone, in others of the whole clergy. They met once or twice in the year; they were summoned by the metropolitan bishop, who presided in the meeting, and derived from, or confirmed his metropolitan dignity, by this presidency.‡

Archbishops and patriarchs.

As the metropolitans rose above the bishops, so the archbishops or patriarchs rose above the metropolitans. These ecclesiastical dignities seem to have been formed according to the civil divisions of the empire.§ The patriarchs of Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome, and by a formal decree of the Council of Chalcedon, Constantinople, assumed even a higher dignity. They asserted the

* See the list of earlier synods chiefly on this subject, Labbe, Concilia, vol. i. p. 595. 650., edit. Paris, 1671.

† See the remarkable passage in Tertullian, de Jejunio, with the ingenious commentary of Mosheim, De Reb. Christ. ante Const. M. pp. 264. 268.

‡ Necessariò apud nos fit, ut per singulos annos seniores et præpositi in unum conveniamus, ad disponenda ea, quæ curæ nostræ commissa sunt. Firm. ad Cyprian. Ep. 75.

§ Bingham names thirteen or fourteen patriarchs. Alexandria, Antioch, Cæsarea, Jerusalem, Ephesus, Constantinople, Thessalonica, Sirmium, Rome, Carthage, Milan, Lyons, Toledo, York. But their respective claims do not appear to have been equally recognised, or at the same period.

BOOK IV.

right, in some cases, of appointing, in others of deposing, even metropolitan bishops.*

While Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople contested the supremacy of the East, the two former as more ancient and Apostolic churches, the latter as the imperial city, Rome stood alone, as in every respect the most eminent church in the West. While other churches might boast their foundation by a single apostle (and those churches were always held in peculiar respect), Rome asserted that she had been founded by, and preserved the ashes of two, and those the most distinguished of the Apostolic body. Before the end of the third century, the lineal descent of her bishops from St. Peter was unhesitatingly claimed, and obsequiously admitted by the Christian world.† The

Rome.

name of Rome was still imposing and majestic, particularly in the West; the wealth of the Roman bishop probably far surpassed that of other prelates, for Rome was still the place of general concourse and resort; and the pious strangers who visited the capital would not withhold their oblations to the metropolitan church. Within the city, he presided over above forty churches, besides the sub-

* Chrysostom deposed Gerontius, metropolitan of Nicomedia. Sozomen, viii. 6.

† The passage of Irenæus (lib. ii. c. 3.), as is well known, is the first distinct assertion of any primacy in Peter, and derived from him to the see of Rome. This passage would be better authority if it existed in the original language, not in an indifferent translation; if it were the language of an Eastern, not a Western, prelate, who might acknowledge a supremacy in Rome, which would not have been admitted by the older Asiatic sees; still more, if it did not assert what is manifestly untrue, the *foundation* of the Church of Rome by St. Peter and St. Paul (see vol. ii. p. 44.); and, finally, if Irenæus could be conclusive authority on such a subject. Planck justly observes, that the potior principalitas of the city of Rome was the primary reason why a potior principalitas was recognised in the see of Rome.

urbicarian districts. The whole clerical establishment at Rome amounted to forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven sub-deacons, forty-two acolyths, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and doorkeepers. It comprehended fifteen hundred widows and poor brethren, with a countless multitude of the higher orders and of the people. No wonder that the name, the importance, the wealth, the accredited Apostolic foundation of Rome, arrayed her in pre-eminent dignity. Still, in his correspondence with the Bishop of Rome, the general tone of Cyprian, the great advocate of Christian unity, is that of an equal; though he shows great respect to the Church of Rome, it is to the faithful guardian of an uninterrupted tradition, not as invested with superior authority.*

As the hierarchical pyramid tended to a point, its base spread out into greater width. The greater pomp of the services, the more intricate administration of affairs, the greater variety of regulations required by the increasing and now strictly separated classes of votaries, imposed the necessity for new functionaries, besides the bishops, priests, and deacons. These were the archdeacon and the five

* While I deliver my own conclusions, without fear or compromise, I would avoid all controversy on this as well as on other subjects. It is but right, therefore, for me to give the two apparently conflicting passages in Cyprian on the primacy of St. Peter: — Nam nec Petrus quem primùm Dominus elegit, et super quem ædificavit Ecclesiam suam * * vindicavit sibi aliquid insolenter aut arroganter assumpsit, ut diceret se primatum tenere, et obtemperari à novellis et posteris sibi potius oportere." Epist. lxxi. Hoc erant utique cæteri Apostoli, quod fuit Petrus, pari consortio prædíti et honoris et potestatis; sed exordium ab unitate proficiscitur, et primatus Petro datur, ut una Christi ecclesia, et cathedra una monstretur. De Unit. Eccles.

BOOK IV.

New sacred offices.

subordinate officiating ministers, who received a kind of ordination. 1. The sub-deacon, who, in the Eastern church, collected the alms of the laity and laid them upon the altar; and, in the Western, acted as a messenger, or bearer of despatches. 2. The reader, who had the custody of the sacred books, and, as the name implies, read them during the service. 3. The acolyth, who was an attendant on the bishop, carried the lamp before him, or bore the eucharist to the sick. 4. The exorcist, who read the solemn forms over those possessed by dæmons, the energoumenoi, and sometimes at baptisms. 5. The ostiarius or doorkeeper, who assigned his proper place in the church to each member, and guarded against the intrusion of improper persons.

As Christianity assumed a more manifest civil existence, the closer correspondence, the more intimate sympathy between its remote and scattered members, became indispensable to its strength and consistency. Its uniformity of developement in all parts of the world arose out of, and tended to promote, this unity. It led to that concentration of the governing power in a few, which terminated at length in the West in the unrestricted power of one.

The internal unity of the Church, or universally disseminated body of Christians, had been maintained by the general similarity of doctrine, of sentiment, of its first simple usages and institutions, and the common dangers which it had endured in all parts of the world. It possessed its consociating principles in the occasional correspond-

CHAP. I.

Unity of the Church.

ence between its remote members, in those recommendatory letters with which the Christian who travelled was furnished to his brethren in other parts of the empire; above all, in the common literature, which, including the sacred writings, seems to have spread with more or less regularity through the various communities. Nothing however tended so much, although they might appear to exacerbate and perpetuate diversities of opinion, to the maintenance of this unity, as the assemblage and recognition of general Councils as the representatives of universal Christendom.* The bold

General Councils.

* The earliest councils (not œcumenic) were those of Rome (1st and 2d) and the seven held at Carthage, concerning the lapsi, the schism of Novatianus, and the rebaptizing of heretics. The seventh in Routh, Reliquiæ Sacræ (Labbe, Concilia III.), is the first of which we have any thing like a report; and from this time, either from the canons which they issue, or the opinions delivered by the bishops, the councils prove important authorities, not merely for the decrees of the Church, but for the dominant tone of sentiment, and even of manners. Abhorrence of heresy is the prevailing feeling in this council, which decided the validity of heretical baptism. "Christ," says one bishop, "founded the Church, the Devil heresy. How can the synagogue of Satan administer the baptism of the Church?" Another subjoins, "He who yields or betrays the baptism of the Church to heretics, what is he but a Judas of the spouse of Christ." The Synod or Council of Antioch (A. D. 269) condemned Paul of Samosata. The Council of Illiberis (Elvira, or Granada), A. D. 303, affords some curious notices of the state of Christianity in that remote province. Some of the Heathen flamines appear to have attempted to reconcile the performances of some of their religious duties, at least their presiding at the games, with Christianity. There are many moral regulations which do not give a high idea of Spanish virtue. The bishops and clergy were not to be itinerant traders; they might trade within the province (can. xviii.), but were on no account to take upon usury. The Jews were probably settled in great numbers in Spain: the taking food with them is interdicted, as also to permit them to reap the harvest. Gambling is forbidden. The councils of Rome and of Arles were held to settle the Donatist controversy; but of the latter there are twenty-two canons chiefly of ecclesiastical regulations. The Council of Ancyra principally relates to the conduct of persons during the time of persecution. The Council of Laodicea has some curious general canons. The first œcumenic council was

BOOK IV.

impersonation, the Church, seemed now to assume a more imposing visible existence. Its vital principle was no longer that unseen and hidden harmony which had united the Christians in all parts of the world with their Saviour and with each other. By the assistance of the orthodox Emperors, and the commanding abilities of its great defenders, one dominant form of doctrine had obtained the ascendancy; Gnosticism, Donatism, Arianism, Manicheism, had been thrown aside; and the Church stood, as it were, individualised, or idealised, by the side of the other social impersonation, the State. The Emperor was the sole ruler of the latter, and at this period the aristocracy of the superior clergy, at a later the autocracy of the Pope, at least as the representative of the Western Church, became the supreme authority of the former. The hierarchical power, from exemplary, persuasive, amiable, had become authoritative, commanding, awful. When Christianity became the most powerful religion, when it became the religion of the many, of the Emperor, of the State, the convert, or the hereditary Christian had no strong Pagan party to receive him back into its bosom

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that of Nice. See book iii. c. iv. It was followed by the long succession of Arian, and anti-Arian councils, at Tyre, Antioch, Rome, Milan, Sardica, Rimini, &c. The Arian Council of Antioch is very strict in its regulations for the residence of the bishops and the clergy, and their restriction of their labours to their own dioceses or cures (A.D. 341). Apud Labbe, vol. ii. 559. The first of Constantinople was the second œcumenic council (A.D. 381). It re-established Trinitarianism as the doctrine of the East; it elevated the bishopric of Constantinople into a patriarchate, to rank after Rome. The two other of the œcumenic councils are beyond the bounds of the present history.

when outcast from the Church. If he ceased to believe, he no longer dared cease to obey. No course remained but prostrate submission, or the endurance of any penitential duty which might be enforced upon him; and on the penitential system, and the power of excommunication, to which we shall revert, rested the unshaken hierarchical authority over the human soul.

Increase in pomp.

With their power increased both those other sources of influence, pomp and wealth. Distinctions in station and in authority naturally lead to distinctions in manners, and those adventitious circumstances of dress, carriage, and habits, which designate different ranks. Confederating upon equal terms, the superior authorities in the church and state began to assume an equal rank. In the Christian city, the bishop became a personage of the highest importance; and the clergy, as a kind of subordinate religious magistracy, claimed, if a different kind, yet an equal share of reverence, with the civil authority; where the civil magistrate had his insignia of office, the natural respect of the people, and the desire of maintaining his official dignity, would invest the religious functionary likewise with some peculiar symbol of his character. With their increased rank and estimation, the clergy could not but assume a more imposing demeanour; and that majesty in which they were arrayed during the public ceremonial could not be entirely thrown off when they returned to ordinary life. The reverence of man exacts dignity from those who are its objects. The

BOOK IV.

primitive Apostolic meanness of appearance and habit was altogether unsuited to their altered position, as equal in rank, more than equal in real influence and public veneration, to the civil officers of the empire or municipality. The consciousness of power will affect the best disciplined minds, and the unavoidable knowledge that salutary authority is maintained over a large mass of mankind by imposing manners, dress, and mode of living, would reconcile many to that which otherwise might appear incongruous to their sacred character. There was in fact, and always has been, among the more pious clergy, a perpetual conflict between a conscientious sense of the importance of external dignity and a desire, as conscientious, of retaining something of outward humility. The monkish and ascetic waged implacable war against that secular distinction which, if in some cases eagerly assumed by pride and ambition, was forced upon others by the deference, the admiration, the trembling subservience of mankind. The prelate who looked the most imperious, and spoke most sternly, on his throne, fasted and underwent the most humiliating privations in his chamber or his cell. Some prelates supposed, that as ambassadors of the Most High, as supreme governors in that which was of greater dignity than the secular empire, the earthly kingdom of Christ, they ought to array themselves in something of imposing dignity. The bishops of Rome early affected state and magnificence, Chrysostom, on the other hand, in Constantinople, differing from his predecessors, considered poverty of

dress, humility of demeanour, and the most severe austerity of life, as more becoming a Christian prelate, who was to set the example of the virtues which he inculcated, and to show contempt for those worldly distinctions which properly belonged to the civil power. Others, among whom was Ambrose of Milan, while in their own persons and in private they were the plainest, simplest, and most austere of men, nevertheless threw into the service of the Church all that was solemn and magnificent; and as officiating functionaries, put on for the time the majesty of manner, the state of attendance, the splendour of attire, which seemed to be authorised by the gorgeousness of dress and ceremonial pomp in the Old Testament.*

With the greater reverence, indeed, peculiar sanctity was exacted, and no doubt, in general, observed by the clergy. They were imperatively required to surpass the general body of Christians in

* The clergy were long without any distinction of dress, except on ceremonial occasions. At the end of the fourth century, it was the custom for them in some churches to wear black. Socr. H. E. vi. 22. Jerome, however, recommends that they should neither be distinguished by too bright or too sombre colours. Ad Nepot. The proper habits were probably introduced at the end of the fifth century, as they are recognised by councils in the sixth. Conc. Matisc. A. D. 581, can. 1. 5.; Trull. c. 27. The tonsure began in the fourth century. Prima del iv. secolo i semplici preti non avevano alcun abito distinto dagli altri o Pagani o Cristiani, se non in quanto la professata loro umiltà faceva una certa pompa de abjezione e de povertà. Cicognara, Storia de Scultura, t. i. p. 27. Count Cicognara gives a curious account of the date and origin of the different parts of the clerical dress. The mitre is of the eighth century, the tiara of the tenth.

The fourth Council of Carthage (A. D. 398) has some restrictions on dress. The clericus was not to wear long hair or beard (nec comam habeat nec barbam. Can. xliv.); he was to approve his professon by his dress and walk, and not to study the beauty of his dress or sandals. He might obtain his sustenance by working as an artisan, or in agriculture, provided he did not neglect his duty. Can. li. lii.

BOOK IV.

purity of morals, and, perhaps even more, in all religious performances. As the outward ceremonial, fasting, public prayer during almost every part of the day, and the rest of the ritual service, were more completely incorporated with Christianity, they were expected to maintain the public devotion by their example, and to encourage self-denial by their more rigid austerity.

Wealth of the clergy.

Wealth as well as pomp followed in the train of power. The desire to command wealth (we must not yet use the ignoble term covetousness) not merely stole imperceptibly into intimate connection with religion, but appeared almost a part of religion itself. The individual was content to be disinterested in his own person; the interest which he felt in the opulence of the Church, or even of his own order, appeared not merely excusable, but a sacred duty. In the hands of the Christian clergy, wealth, which appeared at that period to be lavished on the basest of mankind, and squandered on the most criminal and ignominious objects, might seem to be hallowed to the noblest purposes. It enabled Christianity to vie with Paganism in erecting splendid edifices for the worship of God, to provide an imposing ceremonial, lamps for midnight service, silver or golden vessels for the altar, veils, hangings, and priestly dresses; it provided for the wants of the poor, whom misgovernment, war, and taxation, independent of the ordinary calamities of human life, were grinding to the earth. To each church were attached numbers of widows and other destitute persons; the redemp-

Uses to which it was applied.

tion of slaves was an object on which the riches of the Church were freely lavished: the sick in the hospitals and prisons, and destitute strangers were under their especial care. "How many captives has the wealth of the Pagan establishment released from bondage?" This is among the triumphant questions of the advocates of Christianity.* The maintenance of children exposed by their parents, and taken up and educated by the Christians, was another source of generous expenditure. When, then, at first the munificence of the Emperor, and afterwards the gratitude and superstitious fears of the people, heaped up their costly offerings at the feet of the clergy, it would have appeared not merely ingratitude and folly, but impiety and uncharitableness to their brethren, to have rejected them. The clergy, as soon as they were set apart from the ordinary business of life, were maintained by the voluntary offerings of their brethren. The piety which embraced Christianity never failed in liberality. The payments seem chiefly to have been made in kind, rather than in money, though on extraordinary occasions large sums were raised for some sacred or charitable object. One of the earliest acts of Constantine was to make munificent grants to the despoiled and destitute Church.† A certain portion of the public stores of corn and other produce, which was received in kind by the officers of the revenue, was assigned to the Church and clergy.‡ This was withdrawn by Julian, and

* Ambros. contra Symmachum.
† Euseb. H. E. x. 6.
‡ Sozomen, H. E. v. 5.

BOOK IV.

when regranted by the Christian Emperors, was diminished one third.

Law of Constantine empowering the Church to receive bequests.

The law of Constantine which empowered the clergy of the Church to receive testamentary bequests, and to hold land, was a gift which would scarcely have been exceeded if he had granted them two provinces of the empire.* It became almost a sin to die without some bequest to pious uses; and before a century had elapsed, the mass of property which had passed over to the Church was so enormous, that the most pious of the Emperors were obliged to issue a restrictive law, which the most ardent of the Fathers were constrained to approve. Jerome acknowledges, with the bitterness of shame, the necessity of this check on ecclesiastical avarice.† "I complain not of the law, but that we have deserved such a law." The ascetic father and the Pagan historian describe the pomp and avarice of the Roman clergy in the fourth century. Ammianus, while he describes the sanguinary feud which took place for the prelacy between Damasus and Ursicinus, intimates that the magnificence of the prize may account for the obstinacy and ferocity with which it was contested. He dwells on

Restrictive edict of Valentinian.

Pope Damasus.

* This is the observation of Planck.

† Valentinian II. de Episc. Solis clericis et monachis hæc lege prohibetur, et prohibetur non à persecutoribus sed à principibus Christianis; nec de lege conqueror, sed doleo cur meruerimus hanc legem. Hieronym. ad Nepot. He speaks also of the provida severaque legis cautio, *et tamen* non sic refrænatur avaritia. Ambrose (l. ii. adv. Symm.) admits the necessity of the law. Augustine, while he loftily disclaims all participation in such abuses, acknowledges their frequency. Quicunque vult, exhæredato filio hæredem facere ecclesiam, quærat alterum qui suscipiat, non Augustinum, immo, Deo propitio, inveniat neminem. Serm. 49.

the prodigal offerings of the Roman matrons to their bishop; his pomp, when in elaborate and elegant attire he was borne in his chariot through the admiring streets; the costly luxury of his almost imperial banquets. But the just historian contrasts this pride and luxury of the Roman pontiff with the more temperate life and dignified humility of the provincial bishops. Jerome goes on sternly to charge the whole Roman clergy with the old vice of the Heathen aristocracy, hæredipety or legacy hunting, and asserts that they used the holy and venerable name of the Church to extort for their own personal emolument, the wealth of timid or expiring devotees. The law of Valentinian justly withheld from the clergy and the monks alone that privilege of receiving bequests which was permitted to the "lowest of mankind, Heathen priests, actors, charioteers and harlots."

Large parts of the ecclesiastical revenues, however, arose from more honourable sources. Some of the estates of the Heathen temples, though in general confiscated to the imperial treasury, were alienated to the Christian churches. The Church of Alexandria obtained the revenue of the Temple of Serapis.*

These various estates and properties belonged

* Sozomen, v. 7. The Church of Antioch possessed lands, houses, rents, carriages, mules, and other kinds of property. It undertook the daily sustenance of 3000 widows and virgins, besides prisoners, the sick in the hospitals, the maimed, and the diseased, who sat down, as it were before the Christian altar, and received food and raiment, besides many other accidental claims on their benevolence. Chrysostom, Oper. Montfaucon in his dissertation, gives the references.

BOOK IV.

Application of the wealth of the Church.

to the Church in its corporate capacity, not to the clergy. They were charged with the maintenance of the fabric of the church, and the various charitable purposes, including the sustenance of their own dependent poor. Strong enactments were made to prevent their alienation from those hallowed purposes *, the clergy were even restrained from bequeathing by will what they had obtained from the property of the Church. The estates of the Church were liable to the ordinary taxes, the land and capitation tax, but exempt from what were called sordid and extraordinary charges, and from the quartering of troops.†

The bishops gradually obtained almost the exclusive management of this property. In some churches, a steward (œconomus) presided over this department, but he would, in general, be virtually under the control of the bishop. In most churches, the triple division began to be observed; one third of the revenue to the bishop, one to the clergy, the other to the fabric and the poor; the Church of Rome added a fourth, a separate portion for the fabric.‡

The clergy had become a separate community; they had their own laws of internal government,

* Conc. Carth. iii. 40.; Antioch, 24. Constit. Apost. 40. Cod. Theodos. de Episc. et Clericis, t. 33.

† Planck, P. iii. c. vi. 3.

‡ By a law of Theodosius and Valens, A. D. 434, the property of any bishop, presbyter, deacon, deaconess, sub-deacon, &c., or of any monk, who died intestate, and without legal heirs, fell, not to the treasury, as in ordinary cases, but to the church or monastery to which he belonged. The same privilege was granted to the Corporation of Decurions. Codex Theodos. v. iii. 1.

their own special regulations, or recognised proprieties of life and conduct. Their social delinquencies were not as yet withdrawn from the civil jurisdiction; but besides this, they were amenable to the severe judgments of ecclesiastical censure *; the lowest were liable to corporeal chastisement. Flagellation, which was administered in the synagogue, and was so common in Roman society, was by no means so disgraceful as to exempt the persons at least of the inferior clergy from its infliction. But the more serious punishment was degradation into the vulgar class of worshippers. To them it was the most fearful condemnation to be ejected from the inner sanctuary and thrust down from their elevated station. †

Celibacy of the clergy.

As yet they were not entirely estranged from society, they had not become a caste by the legal enforcement or general practice of celibacy. Clement, of Alexandria asserts and vindicates the marriage of some of the Apostles. ‡

* Sozomen states that Constantine gave his clergy the privilege of rejecting the jurisdiction of the civil tribunal, and bringing their causes to the bishop. P. M. i. 9. But these were probably disputes between clergyman and clergyman. All others were cases of arbitration, by mutual agreement; but the civil power was to ratify their decree. In a Novella of Valentinian, A.D. 752, it is expressly said, — Quoniam constat episcopos et presbyteros forum legibus non habere * * nec de aliis causis præter religionem posse cognoscere. Compare Planck, p. 300. The clericus was bound to appear, if summoned by a layman, before the ordinary judge. Justinian made the change, and that only in a limited manner.

† The decrees of the fourth council of Carthage show the strict morals and humble subordination demanded of the clergy at the close of the fourth century.

‡ Ἦ καὶ τοὺς Ἀποστόλους ἀποδοκιμάζουσι; Πέτρος μὲν γὰρ καὶ Φίλιππος ἐπαιδοποιήσαντο. Φίλιππος δὲ καὶ τὰς θυγατέρας ἀνδράσιν ἐξέδωκεν, καὶ ὅγε Παῦλος οὐκ ὀκνεῖ ἔν τινι ἐπιστολῇ τὴν αὐτῶν προσαγορεύειν σύζυγον, ἣν οὐ περιεκόμιζεν διὰ τὸ τῆς ὑπηρεσίας εὐσταλές. — Strom. l. iii. c. 6. On the question of the marriage of the Apostles and their immediate followers, almost every thing is collected in a note of Cotelerius, Patres Apostolici, ii. 241.

BOOK IV.

The discreet remonstrance of the old Egyptian bishop perhaps prevented the Council of Nice from imposing that heavy burden on the reluctant clergy. The aged Paphnutius, himself unmarried, boldly asserted that the conjugal union was chastity.* But that, which, in the third century is asserted to be free to all mankind, clergy as well as laity, in Egypt†, in the fourth, according to Jerome, was prohibited or limited by vows of continence. It has been asserted‡, and without refutation, that there was no ecclesiastical law or regulation which compelled the celibacy of the clergy for the first three centuries. Clement of Alexandria, as we see, argues against enforced celibacy from the example of the Apostles. Married bishops and presbyters frequently occur in the history of Eusebius. The martyrdom of Numidicus was shared and not dishonoured by the companionship of his wife.§ It was a sight of joy and consolation to the husband to see her perishing in the same flames. The wives of the clergy are recognised, not merely in the older writings, but also in the public documents of the Church.‖ Council after council, in the East, introduced regulations, which, though intended to

* Gelasii. Histor. Conc. Nic. c. xxxii. Socrat. i. 11. Sozomen, i. 23. Baronius insists upon this being *Greek* fable.

† Ναὶ μὴν καὶ τὸν τῆς μίας γύναικος ἄνδρα πανὺ ἀποδέχεται κἂν πρεσβύτερος ᾖ, κἂν διάκονος, κἂν λαϊκος, ἀνεπιλήπτως γάμῳ χρωμένος. Σώθησέται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονιας. Strom. iii. 12. 9.

‡ By Bingham, book iv.

§ Numidicus presbyter uxorem adhærentem lateri suo, concrematam cum cæteris, vel conservatam potius dixerim, lætus aspexit. Cyprian, p. 525. See in Basnage, Dissertatio Septima, a list of married prelaes.

‖ Conc. Gang. c. 4. Conc. Ancyr. c. 10. This law allows any deacon to marry.

restrict, recognise the legality of these ties.* Highly as they exalt the angelic state of celibacy, neither Basil in the East, nor Augustine in the West, positively prohibits the marriage of the clergy.†

But in the fourth century, particularly in the latter half, the concurrent influence of the higher honours attributed to virginity by all the great Christian writers; of the hierarchical spirit, which, even at that time, saw how much of its corporate strength depended on this entire detachment from worldly ties; of the monastic system, which worked into the clerical, partly by the frequent selection of monks for ordination, and for consecration to ecclesiastical dignities, partly by the emulation of the clergy, who could not safely allow themselves to be outdone in austerity by these rivals for popular estimation; all these various influences introduced various restrictions and regulations on the marriage of the clergy, which darkened at length into the solemn ecclesiastical interdict. First, the general sentiment repudiated a second marriage as a monstrous act of incontinence, an infirmity or a sin which ought to prevent the Christian from ever aspiring to any ecclesiastical office.‡ The next offence

* In the West, the Council of Elvira commands the clergy to abstain from connubial intercourse and the procreation of children. Can. xxxiii. This was frequently re-enacted. Among others, Conc. Carthag. v. 2. Labbe, ii. 1216.

† Basil speaks of a presbyter who had contumaciously contracted an unlawful marriage. Can. ii. c. 27. On Augustine, compare Theiner, p. 154.

‡ Athenagoras laid down the general principle, ὁ γὰρ δεύτερος (γάμος) εὐπρεπὴς ἐστι μοίχεια. De Resurr. Carn. Compare Orig. contr. Cels. vii., and Hom. vi., in Num. xviii., in Luc. xviii., in Matt. Tertull. ad Uxor. 1—5. This was almost an universal moral axiom. Epiphanius

BOOK IV.

against the general feeling was marriage with a widow; then followed the restriction of marriage after entering into holy orders; the married priest retained his wife, but to condescend to such carnal ties after ordination, was revolting to the general sentiment, and was considered to imply a total want of feeling for the dignity of their high calling. Then was generally introduced a demand of abstinence from sexual connection from those who retained their wives: this was imperatively required from the higher orders of the clergy. It was considered to render unclean, and to disqualify even from prayer for the people, as the priest's life was to be a perpetual prayer.* Not that there was as yet any uniform practice. The bishops assembled at the Council of Gangra† condemned the followers of Eustathius, who refused to receive the sacraments from any but unmarried priests. The heresy of Jovinian, on the other hand, probably

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said, that since the coming of Christ no digamous clergyman had ever been ordained. Barbeyrac has collected the passages of the Fathers expressive of their abhorrence of second marriages. Morale des Pères, p. 1. 29. 34. 37. &c. The Council of Neo-Cæsarea forbade clergymen to be present at a second marriage — *πρεσβύτερον εἰς γάμους διγαμοῦντων μὴ ἐστιᾶσθαι.* Can. vii.

* Such is the distinct language of Jerome. Si laicus et quicunque fidelis orare non potest nisi carent officio conjugali, sacerdoti, cui semper pro populo offerenda sunt sacrificia semper orandum est. Si semper orandum est, semper carendum matrimonio. Adv. Jovin. p. 175.

† The Council of Gangra, in the preamble and in the first canon do not appear to refer necessarily to the wives of the clergy. They anathematise certain teachers (the Eustathians) who had blamed marriage, and said that a faithful and pious woman who slept with her husband could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. A sacred virgin is prohibited from vaunting over a married woman, canon x. Women are forbidden to abandon their husbands and children.

called forth the severe regulations of Pope Siricius.* This sort of encyclical letter positively prohibited all clergy of the higher orders from any intercourse with their wives. A man who lived to the age of thirty, the husband of one wife, that wife, when married, a virgin, might be an acolyth or subdeacon; after five years of strict continence, he might be promoted to a priest; after ten years more of the same severe ordeal, a bishop. A clerk, any one in holy orders, even of the lowest degree, who married a widow, or a second wife, was instantly deprived: no woman was to live in the house of a clerk.

The Council of Carthage, reciting the canon of a former council, commands the clergy to abstain from all connection with their wives. The enactment is perpetually repeated, and in one extended to subdeacons.† The Council of Toledo prohibited the promotion of ecclesiastics who had children. The Council of Arles prohibited the ordination of a married priest‡, unless he made a promise of divorce from the married state. Jerome distinctly asserts that it was the universal regulation of the East, of Egypt, and of Rome § to ordain only

* The letter of Siricius in Mansi Concil. iii. 635., A.D. 385.

† These councils of Carthage are dated A.D. 390, 418, and 419.

‡ Assumi aliquem ad sacerdotium non posse in vinculo sacerdotii constitutum, nisi primum fuerit promissa conversio. A.D. 452.

§ Quid facient Orientis Ecclesiæ? quid Ægypti, et sedis Apostolicæ, quæ aut virgines clericos accipiunt aut continentes; aut si uxores habuerint, mariti esse desistunt. Adv. Vigilantium, p. 281. Jerome appeals to Jovinian himself:—"Certè confiteris non posse esse episcopum qui in episcopatu filios faciat, alioqui si deprehensus fuerit, non quasi vir tenebitur, sed quasi adulter damnabitur. Adv. Jovin. 175. Compare Epiphanius, Hæres. liv. 4.

BOOK IV.

Married bishops and clergy.

those who were unmarried, or who ceased to be husbands. But even in the fourth, and the beginning of the fifth centuries, the practice rebelled against this severe theory. Married clergymen, even married bishops, and with children, occur in the ecclesiastical annals. Athanasius, in his letter to Dracontius, admits and allows the full right of the bishop to marriage.* Gregory of Nazienzen was born after his father was bishop, and had a younger brother named Cæsarius.† Gregory of Nyssa, and Hilary of Poictiers, were married. Less distinguished names frequently occur: those of Spyridon‡ and Eustathius.§ Synesius, whose character enabled him to accept episcopacy on his own terms, positively repudiated these unnatural restrictions on the freedom and holiness of the conjugal state. "God and the law, and the holy hand of Theophilus bestowed on me my wife. I declare, therefore, solemnly, and call you to witness, that I will not be plucked from her, nor lie with her in secret, like an adulterer. But I hope and pray that we may have many and virtuous children."‖

The Council of Trulla only demanded this high test of spirituality, absolute celibacy, from bishops, and left the inferior clergy to their freedom. But the earlier Western Council of Toledo only ad-

* Athanasii Epistola ad Dracontium.

† Gregory makes his father thus address him:—

Οὔπω τοσοῦτον ἐκμεμέτρηκας βίον
Ὅσος διῆλθε θυσίων ἐμοὶ χρόνος. De Vitâ Suâ, v. 512.

‡ Sozom. i. 11. Socrat. i. 12.

§ Socrat. ii. 43.

‖ Synesii Epist. 105.

mitted the deacon, and that under restrictions, to connubial intercourse; the presbyter who had children after his ordination could not be a bishop.*

Moral consequences.

This overstrained demand on the virtue, not of individuals in a high state of enthusiasm, but of a whole class of men; this strife with nature, in that which, in its irregular and lawless indulgence, is the source of so many evils and of so much misery, in its more moderate and legal form is the parent of the purest affections, and the holiest charities; this isolation from those social ties which, if at times they might withdraw them from total dedication to their sacred duties, in general, would, by their tending to soften and humanise, be the best school for the gentle and affectionate discharge of those duties—the enforcement of the celibacy of the clergy, though not yet by law, by dominant opinion, was not slow in producing its inevitable evils. Simultaneously with the sterner condemnation of marriage, or at least the exaggerated praises of chastity, we hear the solemn denunciations of the law, the deepening remonstrances of the more influential writers, against those secret evasions by which the clergy endeavoured to obtain the fame without the practice of celibacy, to enjoy some of the pleasures and advantages without the crime of marriage. From the middle of the third century, in which the growing aversion to the marriage of the clergy begins to appear, we find the "sub-introduced"

Mulieres subintroductæ.

* Conc. Tolet. A. D. 400, can. i.

BOOK IV.

females constantly proscribed.* The intimate union of the priest with a young, often a beautiful female, who still passed to the world under the name of a virgin, and was called by the priest by the unsuspected name of sister, seems from the strong and reiterated language of Jerome†, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and others, to have been almost general. It was interdicted by an imperial law.‡

Thus, in every city, in almost every town and every village of the Roman empire, had established itself a new permanent magistracy, in

* They are mentioned in the letter of the bishops of Antioch, against Paul of Samosata. The Council of Illiberis (incautiously) allowed a sister, or a virgin, dedicated to God, to reside with a bishop or presbyter, not a stranger.

† Unde sine nuptiis aliud nomen uxorum? Imo unde novum concubinarum genus? Plus inferam. Unde meretrices univiræ? Eadem domo, uno cubiculo, sæpe uno tenentur et lectulo. Et suspiciosos nos vocant, si aliquid existimamus. Frater sororem virginem deserit: cælibem spernit virgo germanum: fratrem quærit extraneum, et cum in eodem proposito esse se simulent quærunt alienorum spiritale solatium, ut domi habeant carnale commercium. Hieronym. Epist. xxii. ad Eustochium. If the vehemence of Jerome's language betrays his own ardent character, and his monkish hostility to the clergy, the general charge is amply borne out by other writers. Many quotations may be found in Gothofred's Note on the Law of Honorius. Gregory of Nazianzen says,—Ἄρσενα παντ' ἀλέεινε, συνείσακτον τε μάλιστα. The language of Cyprian, however, even in the third century, is the strongest: —Certè ipse concubitus, ipse amplexus, ipsa confabulatio, et inosculatio, et conjacentium duorum turpis et fœda dormitio quantum dedecoris et criminis confitetur. Cyprian justly observes, that such intimacy would induce a jealous husband to take to his sword. Epist. lxii. ad Pomponium.

But the canon of the Council of Nice, which prohibits the usage, and forbids the priest to have a subintroducta mulier, unless a mother, sister, or aunt, the only relationships beyond suspicion; and the still stronger tone of the law, show the frequency, as well as the evil, of the practice. Unhappily they were blind to its real cause.

‡ Eum qui probabilem sæculo disciplinam agit decolorari consortio sororiæ appellationis non decet. But this law of Honorius, A. D. 420, allowed the clergy to retain their wives, if they had been married before entering into orders. See the third and fourth canons of the Council of Carthage, A. D. 348.

a certain sense independent of the government, with considerable inalienable endowments, and filled by men of a peculiar and sacred character, and recognised by the state. Their authority extended far beyond their jurisdiction; their influence far beyond their authority. The internal organisation was complete. The three great patriarchs in the East, throughout the West the Bishop of Rome, exercised a supreme and, in some points, an appellant jurisdiction. Great ecclesiastical causes could be removed to their tribunal. Under them, the metropolitans, and in the next rank the bishops, governed their dioceses, and ruled the subordinate clergy, who now began to form parishes, separate districts to which their labours were to be confined. In the superior clergy had gradually become vested, not the ordination only, but the appointment, of the inferior; they could not quit the diocese without letters from the bishop, or be received or exercise their functions in another without permission.

Union of Church and State.

On the incorporation of the Church with the State, the co-ordinate civil and religious magistracy maintained each its separate powers. On one side, as far as the actual celebration of the ecclesiastical ceremonial, and in their own internal affairs in general; on the other, in the administration of the military, judicial, and fiscal affairs of the state, the bounds of their respective authority were clear and distinct. As a citizen and subject, the Christian, the priest, and the bishop, were amenable to the

BOOK IV.

laws of the empire and to the imperial decrees, and liable to taxation, unless specially exempted, for the service of the state.* The Christian statesman, on the other hand, of the highest rank, was amenable to the ecclesiastical censures, and was bound to submit to the canons of the Church in matters of faith and discipline, and was entirely dependent on their judgment for his admission or rejection from the privileges and hopes of the Christian.

So far the theory was distinct and perfect; each had his separate and exclusive sphere; yet there could not but appear a debateable ground on which the two authorities came into collision, and neither could altogether refrain from invading the territory of his ally or antagonist.

Union of the Church and the State.

The treaty between the contracting parties was, in fact, formed with such haste and precipitancy, that the rights of neither party could be defined or secured; eager for immediate union, and impatient of delay, they framed no deed of settlement, by which, when their mutual interests should be less identified, and jealousy and estrangement should arise, they might assert their respective rights, and enforce their several duties.

* The law of Constantius which appears to withdraw the bishops entirely from the civil jurisdiction, and to give the privilege of being tried upon all charges by a tribunal of bishops, is justly considered by Gothofred as a local or temporary act, probably connected with the feuds concerning Arianism. Cod. Theod. xvi. 2. 12., with Gothofred's note. Valens admitted the ecclesiastical courts to settle religious difficulties and slight offences. xvi. 2. 23. The same is the scope of the more explicit law of Honorius. xvi. 2. 201. The immunity of the clergy from the civil courts was of very much later date.

CHAP. I.

In ecclesiastical affairs, strictly so called, the supremacy of the Christian magistracy, it has been said, was admitted. They were the legislators of discipline, order, and doctrine. The festivals, the fasts, the usages and canons of the Church, the government of the clergy, were in their exclusive power; the decrees of particular synods and councils possessed undisputed authority, as far as their sphere extended; general councils were held binding on the whole Church. But it was far more easy to define that which did belong to the province of the Church than that which did not. Religion asserts its authority, and endeavours to extend its influence over the whole sphere of moral action, which is, in fact, over the whole of human life, its habits, manners, conduct. Christianity, as the most profound moral religion, exacted the most complete and universal obedience; and as the acknowledged teachers and guardians of Christianity, the clergy, continued to draw within their sphere every part of human life in which man is actuated by moral or religious motives, the moral authority, therefore, of the religion, and consequently of the clergy, might appear legitimately to extend over every transaction of life, from the legislature of the sovereign, which ought, in a Christian king, to be guided by Christian motives, to the domestic duties of the peasant, which ought to be fulfilled on the principle of Christian love.

But, on the other hand, the State was supreme over all its subjects, even over the clergy, in their

BOOK IV.

character of citizens. The whole tenure of property, to what use soever dedicated (except in such cases as itself might legalise on its first principles, and guarantee, when bestowed, as by gift or bequest), was under its absolute control; the immunities which it conferred, it might revoke; and it would assert the equal authority of the constitutional laws over every one who enjoyed the protection of those laws. Thus, though in extreme cases, these separate bounds of jurisdiction were clear, the tribunals of ecclesiastical and civil law could not but, in process of time, interfere with and obstruct each other.

But there was another prolific source of difference. The clergy, in one sense, from being the representative body, had begun to consider themselves the Church; but in another and more legitimate sense, the State, when Christian, as comprehending all the Christians of the empire, became the Church. Which was the legislative body,—the whole community of Christians or the Christian aristocracy, who were in one sense the admitted rulers? And who was to appoint these rulers? It is quite clear that, from the first, though the consecration to the religious office was in the bishop and clergy, the laity had a voice in the ratification, if not in the appointment. Did not the State fairly succeed to all the rights of the laity, more particularly when privileges and endowments, attached to the ecclesiastical offices, were conferred or guaranteed by the State, and therefore might appear

in justice revocable, or liable to be regulated by the civil power? CHAP. I.

This vital question at this time was still farther embarrassed by the rash eagerness with which the dominant Church called upon the State to rid it of its internal adversaries. When once the civil power was recognised as cognisant of ecclesiastical offences, where was that power to end? The Emperor, who commanded his subjects to be of one religion, might command them, by the same title, to adopt another. The despotic head of the State might assert his despotism as head of the Church. It must be acknowledged that no theory, which has satisfactorily harmonised the relations of these two, at once, in one sense separate, in another identical, communities, has satisfied the reasoning and dispassionate mind; while the separation of the two communities, the total dissociation, as it were, of the Christian and the citizen, is an experiment apparently not likely to advance or perpetuate the influence of Christianity.

At all events, the hasty and unsettled compact of this period left room for constant jealousy and strife. As each was the stronger, it encroached upon, and extended its dominion into the territory of the other. In general, though with very various fortunes, in different parts of the world, and at different periods, the Church was in the ascendant, and for many centuries confronted the State, at least on equal terms.

The first aggression, as it were, which the Church Marriage brought

BOOK IV.

under ecclesiastical discipline.

made on the State, was in assuming the cognisance over all questions and causes relating to marriage. In sanctifying this solemn contract, it could scarcely be considered as transgressing its proper limits, as guardian of this primary element of social virtue and happiness. In the early Church, the benediction of the bishop or presbyter seems to have been previously sought by the Christian at the time of marriage. The Heathen rite of marriage was so manifestly religious, that the Christian, while he sought to avoid that idolatrous ceremony, would wish to substitute some more simple and congenial form. In the general sentiment that this contract should be public and sacred, he would seek the sanction of his own community, as its witnesses. Marriage not performed in the face of his Christian brethren was little better than an illicit union.*

It was an object likewise of the early Christian community to restrict the marriage of Christians to Christians, to discountenance, if not prohibit, those with unbelievers.† This was gradually

* Ideo penes nos occultæ conjunctiones, id est, non prius apud ecclesiam professæ, juxta mœchiam et fornicationem judicari periclitantur. Tertull. de Pudic. c. 4.

Though the rite was solemnised in the presence of the Christian priest, and the Church attempted to impose a graver and more serious dignity, it was not so easy to throw off the gay and festive character which had prevailed in the Heathen times. Paganism, or rather, perhaps, human nature, was too strong to submit. The austere preacher of Constantinople reproved the loose hymns to Venus, which were heard even at Christian weddings. The bride, he says, was borne by drunken men to her husband's house, among choirs of dancing harlots, with pipes and flutes, and songs, full, to her chaste ear, of offensive license.

† A law of Valentinian II., Theodosius and Arcadius (A. D. 388), prohibited the intermarriage of Jews and Christians. Codex Theodos. iii. 7. 2. It was to be considered adultery. — Cave,

CHAP. I.

extended to marriages with heretics, or members of another Christian sect. When, therefore, the Church began to recognise five legal impediments to marriage, this was the Ist, — difference of religion tween Christians and infidels, Jews, or heretics. The IId was, the impediment of crime. Persons guilty of adultery were not allowed to marry according to the Roman law; this was recognised by the Church. A law of Constantius had made rape, or forcible abduction of a virgin, a capital offence; and, even with the consent of the injured female, marriage could not take place. III. Impediments from relationship. Here also they were content to follow the Roman law, which was as severe and precise as the Mosaic Institutes.* IV. The civil impediment. Children adopted by the same father could not marry. A freeman could not marry a slave; the connection was only concubinage. It does not appear that the Church yet ventured to correct this vice of Roman society. V. Spiritual relationship, between godfathers and their spiritual children: this was afterwards carried much farther. To these regulations for the re-

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Christiane, Gentili aut Judæo filiam tradere; cave, inquam, Gentilem aut Judæam atque alienigenam, hoc est, hæreticam, et omnem alienam à fide tuâ uxorem accersas tibi. Ambros. de Abraham. c. 9. Cum certissimè noveris tradi à nobis Christianam nisi Christiano non posse. Augustin. Ep. 234. ad Rusticum.

The council of Illiberis had prohibited Christians from giving their daughters in marriage to Gentiles (propter copiam puellarum), also to Jews, heretics, and especially to Heathen priests. Can. xv. xvi. xvii.

* See the various laws in the Cod. Theod., lib. iii. tit. 12., De Incestis Nuptiis.

BOOK IV.

pression of improper connections, were added some other ecclesiastical impediments. There were holy periods in the year, in which it was forbidden to contract marriage. No one might marry while under ecclesiastical interdict; nor one who had made a vow of chastity.

Divorce.

The facility of divorce was the primary principle of corruption in Roman social life. Augustus had attempted to enforce some restrictions on this unlimited power of dissolving the matrimonial contract from caprice or the lightest motive. Probably, the severity of Christian morals had obtained that law of Constantine which was so much too rigid for the state of society, as to be entirely ineffective, from the impossibility of carrying it into execution.* It was relaxed by Constantius, and almost abrogated by Honorius.† The inveterate evil remained. A Christian writer, at the beginning of the fifth century, complains that men changed their wives as quickly as their clothes, and that marriage

* Codex Theodos. iii. 16. 1. See vol. ii. p. 473.

† By the law of Honorius,— 1. The woman who demanded a divorce without sufficient proof forfeited her dowry, was condemned to banishment, could not contract a second marriage, was without hope of restoration to civil rights. 2. If she made out only a tolerable case (convicted her husband only of mediocris culpa), she only forfeited her dowry, and could not contract a second marriage, but was liable to be prosecuted by her husband for adultery. 3. If she made a strong case (gravis causa), she retained her dowry, and might marry again after five years. The husband, in the first case, forfeited the gifts and dowry, and was condemned to perpetual celibacy, not having liberty to marry again after a certain number of years. In the second, he forfeited the dowry but not the donation, and could marry again after two years. In the third, he was bound to prosecute his guilty wife. On conviction, he received the dowry, and might marry again immediately. Cod. Theodos. iii. xvi. 2.

chambers were set up as easily as booths in a market.* At a later period than that to which our history extends, when Justinian attempted to prohibit all divorces except those on account of chastity, that is when the parties embraced the monastic life, he was obliged to relax the law on account of the fearful crimes, the plots and poisonings, and other evils, which it introduced into domestic life.

But though it could not correct or scarcely mitigate this evil by public law in the general body of society, Christianity, in its proper and more peculiar sphere, had invested marriage in a religious sanctity, which at least, to a limited extent, repressed this social evil. By degrees, separation from bed and board, even in the case of adultery, the only cause which could dissolve the tie, was substituted and enforced by the clergy, instead of legal divorce. Over all the ceremonial forms, and all expressions which related to marriage, the Church threw the utmost solemnity; it was said to resemble the mystic union of Christ and the Church; till at length marriage grew up into a sacrament, indissoluble until the final separation of death, except

* Mulieres à maritis tanquam vestes subinde mutari, et thalamos tam sæpe et facile strui quam nundinarum tabernas. Asterius Amasenus apud Combefis. Auct. t. i.

The story has been often quoted from St. Jerome, of the man (of the lowest class) in Rome, who had had twenty wives (not divorced — had buried them all); his wife had had twenty-two husbands. There was a great anxiety to know which would outlive the other. The man carried the day, and bore his wife to the grave in a kind of triumphal procession. Hieronym. Epist. xci. p. 745.

BOOK IV.

by the highest ecclesiastical authority.* It is impossible to calculate the effect of this canonisation, as it were, of marriage, the only remedy which could be applied, first to the corrupt manners of Roman society, and afterwards to the consequences of the barbarian invasions, in which, notwithstanding the strong moral element in the Teutonic character, and the respect for women (which, no doubt, was one of the original principles of chivalry), yet the dominance of brute force, and the unlimited rights of conquest, could not but lead to the perpetual, lawless, and violent dissolution of the marriage tie.†

Wills.

The cognisance of wills, another department in which the Church assumed a power not strictly ecclesiastical, seems to have arisen partly from an accidental circumstance. It was the custom among the Heathen to deposit wills in the temples, as a place of security; the Christians followed their practice, and chose their churches as the depositaries of these important documents. They thus came under the custody of the clergy, who, from guardians, became, in their courts, the judges of their authenticity or legality, and at length a

* The Eastern churches had a horror of second marriage; a presbyter was forbidden to be present at the wedding-feast of a digamist. Can. vii.

† It is curious to trace the rapid fall of Roman pride. Valentinian made the intermarriage of a Roman provincial with a *barbarian* a capital crime (A. D. 370). Codex Theodos. iii. 14. 1. Under Theodosius, Fravitta, the Goth, married a Roman woman with the consent of the Emperor. Eunap. Excerpt. Legat. In another century, the daughters of emperors were the willing or the enforced brides of barbarian kings.

general tribunal for all matters relating to testaments.

Thus religion laid its sacred control on all the material incidents of human life, and around the ministers of religion gathered all the influence thus acquired over the sentiments of mankind. The font of baptism usually received the Christian infant, and the form of baptism was uttered by the priest or bishop; the marriage was unhallowed without the priestly benediction; and at the close of life, the minister of religion was at hand to absolve and to reassure the departing spirit; at the funeral, he ratified, as it were, the solemn promises of immortality. But the great, permanent, and perpetual source of sacerdotal authority was the penitential discipline of the Church, which was universally recognised as belonging exclusively to the jurisdiction of the clergy. Christianity had sufficient power, to a certain degree, to engross the mind and heart, but not to keep under perpetual restraint the unruly passions or the inquisitive mind. The best were most conscious of human infirmity, and jealous of their own slight aberrations from the catholic belief; the bad had not merely their own conscience, but public fame and the condemnatory voice of the community, to prostrate them before the visible arbiters of the All-seeing Power. Sin, from the most heinous delinquency, or the darkest heresy, to the most trivial fault or the slightest deviation from the established belief, could only be reconciled by the advice, the guidance, at

Penitential discipline.

BOOK IV.

length by the direct authority, of the priest. He judged of its magnitude, he prescribed the appointed penance. The hierarchy were supposed to be invested with the keys of heaven and of hell; they undoubtedly held those which unlock the human heart,—fear and hope. And when once the mind was profoundly affected by Christianity, when hope had failed to excite to more generous obedience, they applied the baser and more servile instrument without scruple and without remorse.

The penitential discipline of the Church, no doubt, grew up, like other usages, by slow degrees; its regulations were framed into a system to meet the exigences of the times; but we discern, at a very early period, the awful power of condemning to the most profound humiliation, to the most agonising contrition, to the shame of public confession, to the abasing supplication before the priest, to long seclusion from the privileges and the society of the Christian community. Even then public confession was the first process in the fearful yet inevitable ceremonial. "Confession of sin," says Tertullian*, "is the proper discipline for the abasement and humiliation of man; it enforces that mode of life which can alone find mercy with God; it prescribes the fitting dress and food of the penitent to be in sackcloth and ashes, to darken the body with filth, to depress the soul with anguish; it allows only the simplest food, enough and no more than will maintain life. Constantly to fast and pray, to groan, to weep, to

* De Pœnitentiâ, c. 9.

howl day and night before the Lord our God, to grovel at the feet of the presbyter, to kneel at the altar of God, to implore from all the brethren their deprecatory supplications." Subsequently, the more complete penitential system rigidly regulated the most minute particulars; the attitude, the garb, the language, or the more expressive silence. The place in which the believer stood, showed to the whole Church how far the candidate for salvation through Christ had been thrown back in his spiritual course, what progress he was making to pardon and peace. The penitent was clothed in sackcloth, his head was strewn with ashes; men shaved their heads, women left their dishevelled hair flung over their bosoms, they wore a peculiar veil; the severest attendance on every religious service was exacted, all diversions were proscribed, marriage was not permitted during the time of penance, the lawful indulgence of the marriage bed was forbidden. Although a regular formulary, which gradually grew into use, imposed canonical penances of a certain period for certain offences, yet that period might be rigidly required or shortened by the authority of the bishop. For some offences, the penitent, who it was believed was abandoned to the power of Satan, was excluded from all enjoyment, all honour, and all society, to the close of life; and the doors of reconciliation were hardly opened to the departing spirit,—wonderful proof how profoundly the doctrines of Christianity had sunk into the human heart, and of the enormous power

BOOK IV.

(and what enormous power is not liable to abuse) in which the willing reverence of the people had invested the priesthood.

But something more fearful still remained. Over all the community hung the tremendous sentence of excommunication, tantamount to a sentence of spiritual death.* This sentence, though not as yet dependent on the will, was pronounced and executed by the religious magistrate. The clergy adhered to certain regular forms of process, but the ultimate decree rested with them.

Excommunication.

Excommunication was of two kinds; first, that which excluded from the communion, and threw back the initiate Christian into the ranks of the uninitiate. This separation or suspension allowed the person under ban to enter the church, to hear the psalms and sermon, and, in short, all that was permitted to the catechumen.

But the more terrible excommunication by anathema altogether banished the delinquent from the church and the society of Christians; it annulled for ever his hopes of immortality through Christ; it drove him out as an outcast to the dominion of the Evil Spirit. The Christian might not comunicate with him in the ordinary intercourse of life; he was a moral leper, whom it was the solemn duty

* Interfici Deus jussit sacerdotibus non obtemperantes, judicibus à se ad tempus constitutis non obedientes; sed tunc quidem gladio occidebantur, quando adhuc et circumcisio carnis manebat. Nunc autem quia circumcisio spiritalis esse apud fideles Dei servos cœpit, spiritali gladio superbi et contumaces *necantur*, dum de ecclesiâ ejiciuntur. Cyprian. Epist. lxii.

Nunc agit in ecclesiâ excommunicatio, quod agebat tunc in interfectis. Augustin. Q. 39. in Deuteron.

of all to avoid, lest they should partake in his contagion. The sentence of one church was rapidly promulgated throughout Christendom; and the excommunicated in Egypt or Syria found the churches in Gaul or Spain closed against him: he was an exile without a resting place. As long as Heathenism survived, at least in equal temporal power and distinction, and another society received with welcome, or at least with undiminished respect, the exile from Christianity, the excommunicated might lull his remaining terrors to rest, and forget, in the business or dissipation of the world, his forfeited hopes of immortality. But when there was but one society, that of the Christians, throughout the world, or at best but a feeble and despised minority, he stood a marked and branded man. Those who were, perhaps, not better Christians, but who had escaped the fatal censures of the Church, would perhaps seize the opportunity of showing their zeal by avoiding the outcast: if he did not lose civil privileges, he lost civil estimation; he was altogether excluded from human respect and human sympathies; he was a legitimate, almost a designated, object of scorn, distrust, and aversion.

The nature, the extent, and some of the moral and even political advantages of excommunication, are illustrated in the act of the celebrated Synesius. The power of the Christian bishop, in his hands, appears under its noblest and most beneficial form. Synesius became a Christian bishop without renouncing the habits, the language, and, in a great

Synesius.

BOOK IV.

degree, the opinions, of a philosopher. His writings, more especially his Odes, blend, with a very scanty Christianity, the mystic theology of the later Platonism; but it is rather philosophy adopting Christian language, than Christianity moulding philosophy to its own uses. Yet so high was the character of Synesius, that even the worldly prelate of Alexandria, Theophilus, approved of his elevation to the episcopate in the obscure town of Ptolemais near Cyrene. Synesius felt the power with which he was invested, and employed it with a wise vigour and daring philanthropy, which commanded the admiration both of philosophy and of religion. The low-born Andronicus was the prefect or rather the scourge and tyrant of Libya; his exactions were unprecedented, and enforced by tortures of unusual cruelty, even in that age and country. The province groaned and bled, without hope of relief, under the hateful and sanguinary oppression. Synesius had tried in vain the milder language of persuasion upon the intractable tyrant. At length he put forth the terrors of the Church to shield the people; and for his rapacity, which had amounted to sacrilege, and for his inhumanity, the president of the whole province was openly condemned, by a sentence of excommunication, to the public abhorrence, excluded from the society and denied the common rights of men. He was expelled from the church, as the Devil from Paradise; every Christian temple, every sanctuary, was closed against the man of blood; the priest was not even to permit him the rights of Christian burial; every pri-

vate man and every magistrate was to exclude him from their houses and from their tables. If the rest of Christendom refused to ratify and execute the sentence of the obscure Church of Ptolemais, they were guilty of the sin of schism. The Church of Ptolemais would not communicate or partake of the divine mysteries with those who thus violated ecclesiastical discipline. The excommunication included the accomplices of his guilt, and by a less justifiable extension of power, their families. Andronicus quailed before the interdict, which he feared might find countenance in the court of Constantinople; bowed before the protector of the people, and acknowleged the justice of his sentence.*

The salutary thunder of sacerdotal excommunication might here and there strike some eminent delinquent †; but ecclesiastical discipline, which in the earlier and more fervent period of the religion, had watched with holy jealousy the whole life of the individual, was baffled by the increase of votaries, which it could no longer submit to this severe and constant superintendence. The clergycould not command, nor the laity require, the sacred duty of secession and outward penance, from the multitude of sinners, when they were the larger part of the

* Synesii Epistolæ, lvii. lviii.

† There is a canon of the Council of Toledo (A.D. 408.) that if any man in power shall have robbed one in holy orders, or a *poor man* (quemlibet pauperiorem), or a monk, and the bishop shall send to demand a hearing for the cause, should the man in power treat his message with contempt, letters shall be sent to all the bishops of the province, declaring him excommunicated till he has heard the cause or made restitution. Can xi. Labbe, ii. 1225.

BOOK IV.

Ecclesiastical censures chiefly confined to heresy.

community. But heresy of opinion was more easily detected than heresy of conduct. Gradually, from a moral as well as a religious power, the discipline became almost exclusively religious, or rather confined itself to the speculative, while it almost abandoned in despair the practical effects of religion. Heresy became the one great crime for which excommunication was pronounced in its most awful form; the heretic was the one being with whom it was criminal to associate, who forfeited all the privileges of religion, and all the charities of life.

Executed by the State.

Nor was this all; in pursuit of the heretic, the Church was not content to rest within her own sphere, to wield her own arms of moral temperament, and to exclude from her own territory. She formed a fatal alliance with the State, and raised that which was strictly an ecclesiastical, an offence against the religious community, into a civil crime, amenable to temporal penalties. The Church, when she ruled the mind of a religious or superstitious emperor, could not forego the immediate advantage of his authority to further her own cause, and hailed his welcome intrusion on her own internal legislation. In fact, the autocracy of the Emperor over the Church, as well as over the State, was asserted in all those edicts which the Church, in its blind zeal, hailed with transport as the marks of his allegiance, but which confounded in inextricable, and to the present time, in deplorable confusion, the limits of the religious and the civil power. The imperial rescripts, which made heresy a civil offence, by affixing penalties which were not purely

CHAP. I.

religious, trespassed as much upon the real principles of the original religious republic, as against the immutable laws of conscience and Christian charity. The tremendous laws of Theodosius*, constituting heresy a capital offence, punishable by the civil power, are said to have been enacted only as a terror to evil-believers, but they betrayed too clearly the darkening spirit of the times; the next generation would execute what the laws of the last would enact. The most distinguished bishops of the time raised a cry of horror at the first executions for religion; but it was their humanity which was startled; they did not perceive that they had sanctioned, by the smallest civil penalty, a false and fatal principle; that though, by the legal establishment, the Church and the State had become, in one sense, the same body, yet the associating principle of each remained entirely distinct, and demanded an entirely different and independent system of legislation, and administration of the law. The Christian hierarchy bought the privilege of persecution at the price of Christian independence.

Civil punishment for ecclesiastical offences.

It is difficult to decide whether the language of the book in the Theodosian code, entitled "On Heretics," contrasts more strongly with the comprehensive, equitable, and parental tone of the Roman jurisprudence, or with the gentle and benevolent spirit of the Gospel, or even with the primary principles of the ecclesiastical community.† The Em-

* See ch. viii. vol. iii. p. 184.

† Hæreticorum vocabulo continentur, et latis adversus eos sanctionibus debent succumbere, qui

BOOK IV.

peror, of his sole and supreme authority, without any recognition of ecclesiastical advice or sanction; the Emperor, who might himself be an Arian or Eunomian, or Manichean—who had so recently been an Arian, defines heresy the very slightest deviation from Catholic verity, and in a succession of statutes inflicts civil penalties, and excludes from the common rights of men, the maintainers of certain opinions. Nothing treasonable, immoral, dangerous to the peace of society, is alleged; the crime, the civil crime, as it now becomes, consists solely in opinions. The law of Constantine, which granted special immunities to certain of his subjects, might perhaps, with some show of equity, confine those immunities to a particular class.* But the gradually darkening statutes proceed from the withholding of privileges to the prohibition of their meetings †, then through confiscation ‡, the refusal of the common right of bequeathing property, fine §, exile ‖, to capital punishment.¶ The latter, indeed, was enacted only against some of the more obscure sects, and some of the Donatists, whose turbulent and se-

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vel levi argumento à judicio Catholicæ religionis et tramite *detecti* fuerint deviare. This is a law of Arcadius. The practice was more lenient than the law.

* The first law of Constantine restricts the immunities which he grants to Catholics. Cod. Theodos. xvi.

† The law of Gratian (IV.) confiscates the houses or even fields in which heretical conventicles are held. See also law of Theodosius, viii.

‡ Leges xi. xii.

§ Ibid. xxi.

‖ Ibid. xviii. liii. lviii.

¶ The law of Theodosius enacts this not against the general body, but some small sections of Manicheans, "Summo supplicio et inexpiabili pœnâ jubemus affligi." ix. This law sanctions the ill-omened name of inquisitors. Compare law xxxv. The "interminata pœna" of law lx. is against Eunomians, Arians, and Macedonians.

ditious conduct might demand the interference of the civil power; but still they are condemned not as rebels and insurgents but as heretics.*

Objects of the great defenders of the hierarchical power.

In building up this vast and majestic fabric of the hierarchy, though individuals might be actuated by personal ambition or interest, and the narrow corporate spirit might rival loftier motives in the consolidation of ecclesiastical power, yet the great object, which was steadily, if dimly seen, was the advancement of mankind in religion, and through religion to temporal and eternal happiness. Dazzled by the glorious spectacle of provinces, of nations, gradually brought within the pale of Christianity, the great men of the fourth century of Christianity were not and could not be endowed with prophetic sagacity to discern the abuses of sacerdotal domination, and the tyranny which, long centuries after, might be exercised over the human mind in the name of religion. *We* may trace the hierarchical principle of Cyprian or of Ambrose to what may seem their natural consequences, religious crusades and the fires of the inquisition; *we* may observe the tendency of unsocial monasticism to quench the charities of life, to harden into cruelty, grovel into licentiousness, and brood over its own ignorance; *we* may trace the predestinarian doctrines of Augustine darkening into narrow bigotry, or maddening to uncharitable fanaticism; *they* only contemplated, *they* only could contemplate, a great

* Ad Heraclianum, lvi. The imperial laws against second baptisms are still more singular invasions of the civil upon the ecclesiastical authority. xvi. tit. vi.

BOOK IV.

moral and religious power opposing civil tyranny, or at least affording a refuge from it; purifying domestic morals, elevating and softening the human heart* ; a wholesome and benevolent force compelling men by legitimate means to seek wisdom, virtue, and salvation; the better part of mankind withdrawing, in holy prudence and wise timidity, from the corruptions of a foul and cruel age, and devoting itself to its own self-advancement, to the highest spiritual perfection; and the general pious assertion of the universal and unlimited providence and supremacy of God. None but the hopeful achieve great revolutions; and what hopes could equal those which the loftier Christian minds might justly entertain of the beneficent influences of Christianity?

We cannot wonder at the growth of the ecclesiastical power, if the Church were merely considered

* The laws bear some pleasing testimonies to the activity of Christian benevolence in many of the obscure scenes of human wretchedness. See the humane law regarding prisoners, that they might have proper food, and the use of the bath. Nec deerit antistitum Christianæ religionis cura laudabilis, quæ ad observationem constituti judicis hanc ingerat monitionem. The Christian bishop was to take care that the judge did his duty. Cod. Theodos. ix. 3. 7.

As early as the reign of Valentinian and Valens, prisoners were released at Easter (ob diem paschæ, quem intimo corde celebramus), excepting those committed for the crimes of treason, poisoning, magic, adultery, rape, or homicide, ix. 36. 3, 4. These statutes were constantly renewed, with the addition of some more excepted crimes— sacrilege, robbery of tombs, and coining.

There is a very singular law of Arcadius prohibiting the clergy and the monks from interfering with the execution of the laws, and forcibly taking away condemned criminals from the hands of justice. They were allowed, at the same time, the amplest privilege of merciful intercession. This was connected with the privilege of asylum. Codex Theodos. ix. 40. 16.

There is another singular law by which corporal punishments were not to be administered in Lent, except against the Isaurian robbers, who were to be dealt with without delay. ix. 35. 5, 6, 7.

CHAP. I.

Dignity and advantage of the clerical station

as a new sphere in which human genius, virtue, and benevolence, might develope their unimpeded energies, and rise above the general debasement. This was almost the only way in which any man could devote great abilities or generous activity to a useful purpose with reasonable hopes of success. The civil offices were occupied by favour and intrigue, often acquired most easily and held most permanently by the worst men for the worst purposes; the utter extinction of freedom had left no course of honourable distinction, as an honest advocate or an independent jurist; literature was worn out; rhetoric had degenerated into technical subtlety; philosophy had lost its hold upon the mind; even the great military commands were filled by fierce and active barbarians, on whose energy Rome relied for the protection of her frontiers. In the Church alone was security, influence, independence, fame, even wealth, and the opportunity of serving mankind. The pulpit was the only rostrum from which the orator would be heard; feeble as was the voice of Christian poetry, it found an echo in the human heart: the episcopate was the only office of dignity which could be obtained without meanness, or exercised without fear. Whether he sought the peace of a contemplative, or the usefulness of an active life, this was the only sphere for the man of conscious mental strength; and if he felt the inward satisfaction that he was either securing his own, or advancing the salvation of others, the lofty mind

BOOK IV.

would not hesitate what path to choose through the darkening and degraded world.

General influence of the clergy.

The just way to consider the influence of the Christian hierarchy (without which, in its complete and vigorous organisation, it is clear that the religion could not have subsisted throughout these ages of disaster and confusion) is to imagine, if possible, the state of things without that influence. A tyranny the most oppressive and debasing, without any principles of free or hopeful resistance, or resistance only attainable by the complete dismemberment of the Roman empire, and its severance into a number of hostile states; the general morals at the lowest state of depravation, with nothing but a religion totally without influence, and a philosophy without authority, to correct its growing cruelty and licentiousness; a very large portion of mankind in hopeless slavery, with nothing to mitigate it but the insufficient control of fear in the master, or occasional gleams of humanity or political foresight in the government, with no inward consolation or feeling of independence whatever. In the midst of this, the invasion of hostile barbarians in every quarter, and the complete wreck of civilisation; with no commanding influence to assimilate the adverse races, without the protection or conservative tendency of any religious feeling to soften; at length to reorganise and re-create, literature, the arts of building, painting, and music; the Latin language itself breaking up into as many countless dialects as there were settlements of barbarous

tribes, without a guardian or sacred depositary; it is difficult adequately to darken the picture of ignorance, violence, confusion, and wretchedness; but without this adequate conception of the probable state of the world without it, it is impossible to judge with fairness or candour the obligations of Europe and of civilisation to the Christian hierarchy.

CHAP. II.

PUBLIC SPECTACLES.

Public spectacles.

THE Greek and Roman inhabitants of the empire were attached with equal intensity to their favourite spectacles, whether of more solemn religious origin, or of lighter and more festive kind. These amusements are perhaps more congenial to the southern character, from the greater excitability of temperament, the less variable climate, which rarely interferes with enjoyment in the open air, and throughout the Roman world, had long been fostered by those republican institutions which gave to every citizen a place and an interest in all public ceremonials, and which, in this respect, still survived the institutions themselves. The population of the great capitals had preserved only the dangerous and pernicious part of freedom, the power of subsisting either without regular industry or with but moderate exertion. The perpetual distribution of corn, and the various largesses at other times, emancipated them in a great degree from the wholesome control of their own necessities; and a vast and uneducated multitude was maintained in idle and dissolute inactivity. It was absolutely necessary to occupy much of this vacant time with public diversions; and the inven-

tion, the wealth, and the personal exertions of the higher orders, were taxed to gratify this insatiable appetite. Policy demanded that which ambition and the love of popularity had freely supplied in the days of the republic, and which personal vanity continued to offer, though with less prodigal and willing munificence. The more retired and domestic habits of Christianity might in some degree seclude a sect from the public diversions, but it could not change the nature or the inveterate habits of a people: it was either swept along by, or contented itself with giving a new direction to, the impetuous and irresistible current; it was obliged to substitute some new excitement for that which it peremptorily prohibited, and reluctantly to acquiesce in that which it was unable to suppress.

Christianity had cut off that part of the public spectacles which belonged exclusively to Paganism. Even if all the temples at Rome were not, as Jerome asserts, covered with dust and cobwebs*, yet, notwithstanding the desperate efforts of the old aristocracy, the tide of popular interest, no doubt, set away from the deserted and mouldering fanes of the Heathen deities, and towards the churches of the Christians. And if this was the case in Rome, at Constantinople and throughout the empire, the Pagan ceremonial was either extinct, or gradually expiring, or lingering on in unimpressive

* Fuligine et aranearum telis omnia Romæ templa cooperta sunt: inundans populus ante delubra semiruta, currit ad martyrum tumulos. Epist. lvii. p. 590.

BOOK IV.

regularity. On the other hand, the modest and unimposing ritual of Christianity naturally, and almost necessarily, expanded into pomp and dignity. To the deep devotion of the early Christians the place and circumstances of worship were indifferent: piety finds every where its own temple. In the low and unfurnished chamber, in the forest, in the desert, in the catacomb, the Christian adored his Redeemer, prayed, chanted his hymn, and partook of the sacred elements. Devotion wanted no accessories; faith needed no subsidiary excitement; or if it did, it found them in the peril, the novelty, the adventurous and stirring character of the scene, or in the very meanness and poverty, contrasted with the gorgeous worship which it had abandoned; in the mutual attachment, and in the fervent emulation, which spreads throughout a small community.

But among the more numerous and hereditary Christians of this period, the temple and the solemn service were indispensable to enforce and maintain the devotion. Religion was not strong enough to disdain, and far too earnest to decline, any legitimate means of advancing her cause. The whole ceremonial was framed with the art which arises out of the intuitive perception of that which is effective towards its end; that which was felt to be awful was adopted to enforce awe; that which drew the people to the church, and affected their minds when there, became sanctified to the use of the church. The edifice itself arose more lofty with the triumph of the faith, and enlarged itself to

Religious ceremonial.

receive the multiplying votaries. Christianity disdained that its God and its Redeemer should be less magnificently honoured than the dæmons of Paganism. In the service it delighted to transfer and to breathe, as it were, a sublimer sense into the common appellations of the Pagan worship, whether from the ordinary ceremonial, or the more secret mysteries. The church became a temple *; the table of the communion an altar; the celebration of the Eucharist the appalling or the unbloody sacrifice.† The ministering functionaries multiplied with the variety of the ceremonial; each was consecrated to his office by a lower kind of ordination; but a host of subordinate attendants by degrees swelled the officiating train. The incense, the garlands, the lamps, all were gradually adopted by zealous rivalry, or seized as the lawful spoils of vanquished Paganism, and consecrated to the service of Christ.

The Church rivalled the old Heathen mysteries in expanding by slow degrees its higher privileges. Christianity was itself the great Mystery, unfolded gradually and in general after a long and searching probation. It still reserved the power of opening at once its gates to the more distinguished proselytes, and of jealously and tardily unclosing them to more doubtful neophytes. It permitted its sanctuary, as it were, to be stormed at once by eminent virtue and unquestioned zeal; but the

* Ambrose and Lactantius, and even Irenæus, use this term. See Bingham, b. viii. l. 4.

† The φρίκτη, or the ἀναίμακτος θυσία.

BOOK IV.

common mass of mankind were never allowed to consider it less than a hard-won privilege to be received into the Church; and this boon was not to be dispensed with lavish or careless hands.* Its preparatory ceremonial of abstinence, personal purity, ablution, secrecy, closely resembled that of the Pagan mysteries (perhaps each may have contributed to the other); so the theologic dialect of Christianity spoke the same language. Yet Christianity substituted for the feverish enthusiasm of some of these rites, and the phantasmagoric terrors of others, with their vague admonitions to purity, a searching but gently administered moral discipline, and more sober religious excitement. It retained, indeed, much of the dramatic power, though under another form.

Divisions of the church.

The divisions between the different orders of worshippers enforced by the sacerdotal authority, and observed with humble submission by the people, could not but impress the mind with astonishment and awe. The stranger, on entering the spacious open court, which was laid out before the more splendid churches, with porticos or cloisters on each side, beheld first the fountain or tank, where the worshippers were expected to wash their hands, and purify themselves, as it were, for the divine presence. Lingering in these porticos, or approaching timidly the threshold which they dared

* It is one of the bitterest charges of Tertullian against the heretics, that they did not keep up this distinction between the catechumens and the faithful. "Imprimis quis catechumenus, quis fidelis, incertum est: pariter adeunt, pariter orant." Even the Heathen were admitted; thus "pearls were cast before swine." De Præscript. Hæret. c. 41.

CHAP. II.

not pass, or, at the farthest, entering only into the first porch, or vestibule*, and pressing around the disciples to solicit their prayers, he would observe men, pale, dejected, clad in sackcloth, oppressed with the profound consciousness of their guilt, acquiescing in the justice of the ecclesiastical censure, which altogether excluded them from the Christian community. These were the first class of penitents, men of notorious guilt, whom only a long period of this humiliating probation could admit even within the hearing of the sacred service. As he advanced to the gates, he must pass the scrutiny of the doorkeepers, who guarded the admission into the church, and distributed each class of worshippers into their proper place. The stranger, whether Heathen or Jew, might enter into the part assigned to the catechumens or novices and the penitents of the second order (the hearers), that he might profit by the religious instruction.†

The porch.

The penitents.

* There is much difficulty and confusion respecting these divisions of the church. The fact probably is, that, according to the period or the local circumstances, the structure and the arrangement were more or less complicated. Tertullian says distinctly, "non modò limine verum omni ecclesiæ tecto submovemus." Where the churches were of a simpler form, and had no roofed narthex or vestibule, these penitents stood in the open court before the church; even later, the flentes and the hiemantes formed a particular class.

A canon of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus gives the clearest view of these arrangements: Ἡ προσκλαυσις ἔξω τῆς πύλης τοῦ εὐκτηρίου ἐστὶν, ἔνθα ἑστῶτα τὸν ἁμαρτάνοντα χρὴ τῶν εἰσιόντων δεῖσθαι πιστῶν ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ εὔχεσθαι· ἡ ἀκρόασις ἔνδοθι τῆς πύλης ἐν τῷ νάρθηκι, ἔνθα ἑστάναι χρὴ τὸν ἡμαρτήκοτα, ἕως τῶν κατηχουμένων, καὶ ἐντεῦθεν ἐξέρχεσθαι· ἀκούων γὰρ φησὶ τῶν γραφῶν καὶ τῆς διδασκαλίας, ἐκβαλέσθω, καὶ μὴ ἀξιούσθω προσευχῆς· ἡ δὲ ὑπόπτωσις, ἵνα ἔσωθεν τῆς πύλης τοῦ ναοῦ ἱστάμενος, μετὰ τῶν κατηχουμένων ἐξέρχηται· ἡ σύστασις, ἵνα συνίσταται τοῖς πιστοῖς καὶ μὴ ἐξέρχηται μετὰ τῶν κατηχουμένων· τελευταῖον ἡ μέθεξις τῶν ἁγιασμάτων. Apud Labbe, Conc. i. p. 842.

† This part of the church was usually called the narthex. But this

BOOK IV.

The narthex.

He found himself in the first division of the main body of the church, of which the walls were lined by various marbles, the roof often ceiled with mosaic, and supported by lofty columns, with gilded capitals; the doors were inlaid with ivory or silver; the distant altar glittered with precious stones.* In the midst of the nave stood the pulpit, or reading-desk (the ambo), around which were arranged the singers, who chanted to the most solemn music, poetry, much of it familiar to the Jew, as belonging to his own sacred writings, to the Heathen full of the noblest images, expressive of the divine power and goodness; adapting itself with the most exquisite versatility to every devout emotion, melting into the most pathetic tenderness, or swelling out into the most appalling grandeur. The pulpit was then ascended by one of the inferior order, the reader of certain portions or extracts from the sacred volumes, in which God himself spoke to the awe-struck auditory. He was succeeded by an orator of a higher dignity, a presbyter or a bishop,

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term, I believe, of the sixth century, was not used with great precision, or rather, perhaps, was applied to different parts of the church, according to their greater or less complexity of structure. It is sometimes used for the porch or vestibule: in this sense there were several nartheces (St. Sophia had four). Mamachi (vol. i. p. 216.) insists that it was divided from the nave by a wall. But this cannot mean the narthex into which the ἀκροώμενοι were admitted, as the object of their admission was that they might hear the service.

Episcopus nullum prohibeat intrare ecclesiam, et audire verbum Dei, sive hæreticum, sive Judæum usque ad missam catechumenorum. Concil. Carthag. iv. c. 84.

*Alii ædificent ecclesias, vestiant parietes marmorum crustis, columnarum moles advehant, earumque deaurent capita, pretiosum ornatum non sentientia, ebore argentoque valvas, et gemmis distinguant altaria. Non reprehendo, non abnuo. Hieronym. Epist. viii. ad Demetriad.

CHAP. II.

The preacher.

who sometimes addressed the people from the steps which led up to the chancel, sometimes chose the more convenient and elevated position of the ambo.* He was a man usually of the highest attainments and eloquence, and instead of the frivolous and subtile questions which the Pagan was accustomed to hear in the schools of rhetoric or philosophy, he fearlessly agitated and peremptorily decided on such eternally and universally awakening topics as the responsibility of man before God, the immortality and future destination of the soul; topics of which use could not deaden the interest to the believer, but which, to an unaccustomed ear, were as startling as important. The mute attention of the whole assembly was broken only by uncontrollable acclamations, which frequently interrupted the more moving preachers. Around the pulpit was the last order of penitents, who prostrated themselves in humble homage during the prayers, and the benediction of of the bishop.

Here the steps of the profane stranger must pause; an insuperable barrier, which he could not pass without violence, secluded the initiate from the society of the less perfect. Yet, till the more secret ceremonial began, he might behold, at dim and respectful distance, the striking scene, first of

* Chrysostom generally preached from the ambo. Socr. vi. 5. Sozomen, viii. 5. Both usages prevailed in the West.

Seu te conspicuis gradibus venerabilis aræ
Concionaturum plebs sedula circumsistat.
Sid. Apollon. can. xvi.

Fronte sub adversâ gradibus sublime tribunal
Tollitur, antistes prædicat unde Deum.
Prudent. Hymn. ad Hippolyt.

the baptized worshippers in their order, the females in general in galleries above (the virgins separate from the matrons). Beyond, in still further secluded sanctity, on an elevated semicircle, around the bishop, sate the clergy, attended by the subdeacons, acolyths, and those of inferior order. Even the gorgeous throne of the Emperor was below this platform. Before them was the mystic and awful table, the altar as it began to be called in the fourth century, over which was sometimes suspended a richly-wrought canopy (the ciborium): it was covered with fine linen. In the third century, the simpler vessels of glass or other cheap material had given place to silver and gold. In the later persecutions, the cruelty of the Heathen was stimulated by their avarice; and some of the sufferers, while they bore their own agonies with patience, were grieved to the heart to see the sacred vessels pillaged, and turned to profane or indecent uses. In the Eastern churches, richly embroidered curtains overshadowed the approach to the altar, or light doors secluded altogether the Holy of Holies from the profane gaze of the multitude.

Such was the ordinary Christian ceremonial, as it addressed the mass of mankind. But at a certain time, the uninitiate were dismissed, the veil was dropped which shrouded the hidden rites, the doors were closed, profane steps might not cross the threshold of the baptistery, or linger in the church, when the Liturgy of the faithful, the office of the eucharist, began. The veil of concealment

CHAP. II.

Secrecy of the sacraments.

was first spread over the peculiar rites of Christianity from caution. The religious assemblies were, strictly speaking, unlawful, and they were shrouded in secrecy lest they should be disturbed by the intrusion of their watchful enemies*; and it was this unavoidable secrecy which gave rise to the frightful fables of the Heathen concerning the nature of these murderous or incestuous banquets. As they could not be public, of necessity they took the form of mysteries, and as mysteries became objects of jealousy and of awe. As the assemblies became more public, that seclusion of the more solemn rites was retained from dread and reverence, which was commenced from fear. Though profane curiosity no longer dared to take a hostile character, it was repelled from the sacred ceremony. Of the mingled multitude, Jews and Heathens, the incipient believers, the hesitating converts, who must be permitted to hear the Gospel of Christ, or the address of the preacher, none could be admitted to the sacraments. It was natural to exclude them, not merely by regulation, and the artificial division of the church into separate parts, but by the majesty which invested the last solemn rites. That which had concealed itself from fear, became itself fearful: it was no longer a timid mystery which fled the light, but an unapproachable communion with the Deity, which would not brook profane intrusion. It is an extraordinary indication of the power of

* Tot hostes ejus, quot extranei et congregationibus opprimimur. ** quotidiè obsidemur, quotidiè prodimur, in ipsis plurimùm cœtibus Tertull. Apologet. 7.

BOOK IV.

Christianity, that rites in themselves so simple, and of which the nature, after all the concealment, could not but be known, should assume such unquestioned majesty; that, however significant, the simple lustration by water, and the partaking of bread and wine, should so affect the awe-struck imagination, as to make men suppose themselves ignorant of what these sacraments really were, and even when the high-wrought expectations were at length gratified, to experience no dissatisfaction at their plain, and in themselves, unappalling ceremonies. The mysteriousness was no doubt fed and heightened by the regulations of the clergy, and by the impressiveness of the service*, but it grew of itself out of the profound and general religious sentiment. The baptistery and the altar were closed against the uninitiate, but if they had been open, men would scarcely have ventured to approach them. The knowledge of the nature of the sacraments was reserved for the baptized; but it was because the minds of the unbaptized were sealed by trembling reverence, and shuddered to anticipate the forbidden knowledge. The hearers had a vague knowledge of these mysteries floating around them, the initiate heard it within.† To add to the impres-

* This was the avowed object of the clergy. Catechumenis sacramenta fidelium non produntur, non ideò fit, quod ea ferre non possunt, sed ut ab eis tanto ardentiùs concupiscantur, quanto honorabiliùs occultantur. August. in Johan. 96. Mortalium generi naturâ datum est, ut abstrusa fortiùs quærat, ut negata magis ambiat, ut tardiùs adepta plus diligat, et eo flagrantiùs ametur veritas, quo vel diutiùs desideratur, vel laboriosiùs quæritur, vel tardiùs invenitur. Claudius Mamert., quoted by Casaubon in Baron. p. 497.

† The inimitable pregnancy of the Greek language expresses this by two verbs differently compounded. Cyril of Jerusalem, in

siveness, night was sometimes spread over the Christian as over the Pagan mysteries.*

At Easter, and at Pentecost †, and in some places at the Epiphany, the rite of Baptism was administered publicly (that is, in the presence of the Faithful) to all the converts of the year, excepting those few instances in which it had been expedient to perform the ceremony without delay, or where the timid Christian put it off till the close of life‡; a practice for a long time condemned in vain by the clergy. But the fact of the delay shows how deeply the importance and efficacy of the rite were rooted in the Christian mind. It was a complete lustration of the soul. The Neophyte emerged from the waters of Baptism in a state of perfect innocence. The Dove (the Holy Spirit) was constantly hovering over the font, and sanctifying the waters to the mysterious ablution of all the sins of the passed life. If the soul suffered no subsequent taint, it passed at once to the realms of purity and bliss; the heart was purified; the understanding illuminated; the spirit was clothed with immortality.§ Robed in white, emblematic of

his Procatechesis, states the Catechumens περιηχεῖσθαι, the Faithful ἐνηχεῖσθαι, by the meaning of the mysteries.

* Noctu ritus multi in mysteriis pergebantur; noctu etiam initiatio Christianorum inchoabatur. Casaubon, p. 490., with the quotations subjoined.

† At Constantinople, it appears from Chrysostom, baptism did not take place at Pentecost. Montfauçon, Diatribe, p. 179.

‡ The memorable example of Constantine may for a time not only have illustrated but likewise confirmed the practice. See Gibbon's note (vol. iii. p. 266.) and the author's observations.

§ Gregory of Nazianzen almost exhausts the copiousness of the Greek language in speaking of Baptism,—δῶρον καλοῦμεν, χάρισμα, βάπτισμα, χρίσμα, φώτισμα, ἀφθαρσίας ἔνδυμα, λοῦτρον παλιγγενεσίας,

BOOK IV.

spotless purity *, the candidate approached the baptistery, in the larger churches a separate building. There he uttered the solemn vows which pledged him to his religion.† The symbolising genius of the East added some significant ceremonies. The Catechumen turned to the West, the realm of Satan, and thrice renounced his power; he turned to the East to adore the Sun of Righteousness ‡, and to proclaim his compact with the Lord of Life. The mystic trinal number prevailed throughout; the vow was threefold, and thrice pronounced. The baptism was usually by immersion; the stripping off the clothes was emblematic of "putting off the old man;" but baptism by sprinkling was allowed, according to the exigency of the case. The water itself became, in the vivid language of the Church, the blood of Christ ‖: it was compared, by a fanciful analogy, to the Red Sea: the daring metaphors of some of the Fathers might seem to assert a transmutation of its colour. §

Eucharist.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper imper-

σφραγίδα, πᾶν ὅτι τίμιον. Orat. xl. de Baptism.

Almost all the Fathers of this age, Basil, the two Gregories, Ambrose (de Sacram) Augustine, have treatises on baptism, and vie, as it were, with each other, in their praises of its importance and efficacy.

* Unde parens sacro ducit de fonte sacerdos
Infantes niveos corpore, corde, habitu. Paulin. ad Sever.

† Chrysostom in two places gives the Eastern profession of faith, which was extremely simple, "I renounce Satan, his pomp and worship, and am united to Christ. I believe in the resurrection of the dead." See references in Montfaucon, *ubi suprà*.

‡ Cyril. Catech. Mystag. Hieronym. in Amos, vi. 14.

§ Unde rubet Baptismus Christi, nisi Christi sanguine consecratur August. Tract. in Johan. Compare Bingham, xi. 10. 4.

ceptibly acquired the solemnity, the appellation, of a sacrifice. The poetry of devotional language kindled into the most vivid and realising expressions of awe and adoration. No imagery could be too bold, no words too glowing, to impress the soul more profoundly with the sufferings, the divinity, the intimate union of the Redeemer with his disciples. The invisible presence of the Lord, which the devout felt within the whole church, but more particularly in its more holy and secluded part, was gradually concentrated as it were upon the altar. The mysterious identification of the Redeemer with the consecrated elements was first felt by the mind, till, at a later period, a material and corporeal transmutation began to be asserted; that which the earlier Fathers, in their boldest figure, called a bloodless sacrifice, became an actual oblation of the body and blood of Christ. But all these fine and subtile distinctions belong to a later theology. In the dim vagueness, in the ineffable and inexplicable mystery, consisted much of its impressiveness on the believer, the awe and dread of the uninitiate.

These Sacraments were the sole real Mysteries; their nature and effects were the hidden knowledge which was revealed to the perfect alone.* In Alexandria, where the imitation or rivalry of

* Quid est quod occultum est et non publicum in Ecclesiâ, Sacramentum Baptismi, Sacramentum Eucharistiæ. Opera nostra bona vident et Pagani, Sacramenta vero occultantur illis. Augustine, in Psalm 103. Ordination appears to have been a secret rite. Casaubon, p. 495. Compare this treatise of Casaubon, the xivth of his Exercitationes Anti-Baronianæ, which in general is profound and judicious.

BOOK IV.

the ancient mysteries, in that seat of the Platonic learning, was most likely to prevail, the catechetical school of Origen attempted to form the simpler truths of the Gospel into a regular and progressive system of development.* The works of Clement of Alexandria were progressive, addressed to the Heathen, the Catechumen, the perfect Christian. But the doctrine which was there reserved for the initiate had a strange tinge of Platonic mysticism. In the church in general the only esoteric doctrine, as we have said, related to the sacraments. After the agitation of the Trinitarian question, there seems to have been some desire to withdraw that holy mystery likewise from the gaze of the profane, which the popular tumults, the conflicts between the Arians and Athanasians of the lowest orders, in the streets of Constantinople and Alexandria, show to have been by no means successful. The apocalyptic hymn, the Trisagion, makes a part indeed of all the older liturgies, which belong to the end of the third or beginning of the fourth century. Even the simple prayer of our Lord, which might seem appropriate to universal man, and so intended by the Saviour himself, was

*Upon this ground rests the famous Discipliua Arcani, that esoteric doctrine, within which lurked every thing which later ages thought proper to dignify by the name of the traditions of the church. This theory was first fully developed by Schelstrate, "De Disciplina Arcani," and is very clearly stated in Pagi, sub. Ann. 118. It rests chiefly on a passage of Origen (contra Cels. i. 7.) who, after asserting the publicity of the main doctrines of Christianity, the incarnation, passion, and resurrection of Christ, and the general resurrection to judgment, admits that Christianity, like Philosophy, had some secret and esoteric doctrines. Pagi argues that, as the Trinity was not among the public, it must have been among the esoteric tenets.

considered too holy to be uttered by unbaptised lips. It was said that none but the baptised could properly address the Almighty as his Father.*

Christian funerals.

That care which Christianity had assumed over the whole life of man, it did not abandon after death. In that solemn season it took in charge the body, which, though mouldering into dust, was to be revived for the resurrection. The respect and honour which human nature pays to the remains of the dead, and which, among the Greeks especially, had a strong religious hold upon the feelings, was still more profoundly sanctified by the doctrines and usages of Christianity. The practice of inhumation which prevailed in Egypt and Syria, and in other parts of the East, was gradually extended over the whole western world by Christianity.† The funeral pyre went out of use, and the cemeteries, which from the earliest period belonged to the Christians, were gradually enlarged for the general reception, not of the ashes only in their urns, but for the entire remains of the dead. The Eastern practice of embalming was so general‡, that Ter-

* Bingham, i. 4. 7. and x. 5. 9.

† Nec, ut creditis, ullum damnum sepulturæ timemus, sed veterem et meliorem consuetudinem humandi frequentamus. The speaker goes on, in very elegant language, to adduce the analogy of the death and revival of nature,—Expectandum etiam nobis corporis ver est. Minuc. Fel. edit. Ouzel, p. 327. During the time of the plague in Alexandria and Carthage, the Christians not only buried their own dead, but likewise those of the Pagans. Dion. Alex. apud Euseb. Hist. vii. 22. Pontius, in Vitâ Cypriani. Compare a curious Essay in the Vermischte Schriften of Böttiger, iii. 14. Verbrennen oder Beerdigen.

‡ Titulumque et frigida saxa
Liquido spargemus odore. Prudent. Hym. de Exeq.

Martyris hi tumulum studeant perfundere nardo
Et medicata pio referant unguenta sepulcro.
Paul. Nol. in Nat. C. Fel.

BOOK IV.

tullian boasts that the Christians consumed more of the merchandise of Sabæa in their interments than the Heathens in the fumigations before the altars of their Gods.* The general tone of the simple inscriptions spoke of death but as a sleep; "he sleeps in peace" was the common epitaph: the very name of the inclosure, the *cemetery*, implied the same trust in its temporary occupancy; those who were committed to the earth only awaited the summons to a new life.† Gradually the cemetery was, in some places, closely connected with the church. Where the rigid interdict against burying within the walls of cities was either inapplicable or not enforced, the open court before the Church became the place of burial.‡

Christian funerals began early in their period of security and opulence to be celebrated with great magnificence. Jerome compares the funeral pro-

* Apologet. c. 42. Boldetti affirms that these odours were plainly perceptible on opening some of the christian cemeteries at Rome. See Mamachi, Costumi dei Christiani, iii. p. 83. The judge in the acts of Tarachus (Ruinart, p. 385.) says, "you expect that your women will bury your body with ointments and spices."

† Hinc maxima cura sepulchris
Impenditur, hinc resolutos
Honor ultimus accipit artus
Et funeris ambitus ornat.

* * *

Quid nam tibi saxa cavata,
Quid pulchra volunt monumenta?
Res quod nisi creditur illis
Non mortua, sed data somno.

Prudent. in Exeq. Defunct.

‡ There is a law of Gratian, Valentinian and Theodosius, forbidding burial, or the deposition of urns (which shows that cremation was still common), within the walls of Constantinople, even within the cemeteries of the apostles or martyrs. Cod. Theod. ix. 17. 6.

cession of Fabiola to the triumphs of Camillus, Scipio, or Pompey. The character of this female, who founded the first hospital in Rome, and lavished a splendid fortune in alms-giving, may have mainly contributed to the strong interest excited by her interment. All Rome was poured forth. The streets, the windows, the tops of houses, were crowded with spectators. Processions of youths and of old men preceded the bier, chaunting the praises of the deceased. As it passed, the churches were crowded, and psalms were sung, and their golden roofs rang with the sublime Alleluia.

Worship of the Martyrs.

The doctrine of the Resurrection of the body deepened the common and natural feeling of respect for the remains of the dead*: the worship of the

* In one of the very curious essays of M. Raoul Rochette, Mémoires de l'Académie, he has illustrated the extraordinary care with which the heathen buried along with the remains of the dead, every kind of utensil, implement of trade, down to the dolls of children; even food and knives and forks. This appears from all the tombs which are opened, from the most ancient Etruscan to the most modern heathen sepulchres. "Il y avait là une notion confuse et grossière sans doute de l'immortalité de l'âme, mais il s'y trouvait aussi la preuve sensible et palpable de cet instinct de l'homme, qui repugne à l'idée de la destruction de son être, et qui y resiste de toutes les forces de son intelligence et de toutes les erreurs même de la raison," p. 689. But it is a more remarkable fact that the Christians long adhered to the same usages, notwithstanding the purer and loftier notions of another life bestowed by their religion. "La première observation qui s'offre à Boldetti luimême et qui devra frapper tous les esprits, c'est qu'en décorant les tombeaux de leurs frères de tant d'objets de pur ornament, ou d'usage réel, les Chrétiens n'avaient pu être dirigés que par ce motif d'espérance qui leur faisait considérer le tombeau comme un lieu de passage, d'ou ils devaient sortir avec toutes les conditions de l'immortalité, et la mort, comme un *sommeil paisible*, au sein duquel il ne pouvait leur être indifférent de se trouver environnés des objets qui leur avaient été chers durant la vie ou de l'image de ces objets," tom. xiii. p. 692.

The heathen practice of burying money, sometimes large sums, with the dead, was the cause of the very

BOOK IV.

relics of saints and martyrs still farther contributed to the same effect. If the splendid but occasional ceremony of the apotheosis of the deceased emperor was exploded, a ceremony which, lavished as it frequently had been on the worst and basest of mankind, however it might amuse and excite the populace, could not but provoke the contempt of the virtuous; in the Christian world a continual, and in some respects more rational, certainly more modest, apotheosis was constantly celebrated. The more distinguished Christians were dismissed, if not to absolute deification, to immortality, to a state, in which they retained profound interest in, and some influence over, the condition of men. During the perilous and gloomy days of persecution, the reverence for those who endured martyrdom for the religion of Christ had grown up out of the best feelings of man's improved nature. Reverence gradually grew into veneration, worship, adoration. Although the more rigid theology maintained a marked distinction

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severe laws against the violations of the tombs. In fact, these treasures were so great, as to be a source of revenue, which the government was unwilling to share with unlicensed plunderers. Et si aurum, ut dicitur, vel argentum fuerit tuâ indagatione detectum, compendio publico fideliter vindicabis, ita tamen ut abstineatis a cineribus mortuorum. Ædificia tegant cineres, columnæ vel marmora ornent sepulcra: talenta non teneant, qui commercia virorum reliquerunt. Aurum enim justè sepulcro detrahitur, ubi dominus non habetur; imò culpæ genus est inutiliter abdita relinquere mortuorum, unde se vita potest sustentare viventium. Such are the instructions of the minister of Theodoric. Cassiod. Var. iv. 34.

But it is still more strange, that the Christians continued this practice, particularly of the piece of money in the mouth, which the Heathen intended for the payment of Charon. It continued to the time of Thomas Aquinas, who, according to M.R.Rochette, wrote against it.

between the honours shown to the martyrs and that addressed to the Redeemer and the Supreme Being, the line was too fine and invisible not to be transgressed by excited popular feeling. The Heathen writers constantly taunt the Christians with the substitution of the new idolatry for the old. The charge of worshipping dead men's bones and the remains of malefactors, constantly recurs. A Pagan philosopher, as late as the fourth century, contemptuously selects some barbarous names of African martyrs, and inquires whether they are more worthy objects of worship than Minerva or Jove.* CHAP. II.

The festivals in honour of the martyrs were avowedly instituted, or at least conducted on a sumptuous scale, in rivalry of the banquets which formed so important and attractive a part of the Pagan ceremonial.† Besides the earliest Agapæ, which gave place to the more solemn Eucharist, there were other kinds of banquets, at marriages and funerals, called likewise Agapæ‡; but those of the martyrs Festivals.

* Quis enim ferat Jovi fulmina vibranti præferri Mygdonem; Junoni, Minervæ, Veneri, Vestæque Sanaem, et cunctis (pro nefas) Diis immortalibus archimartyrem Nymphanionem, inter quos Lucitas haud minore cultu suscipitur atque alii interminato numero; Diisque hominibusque odiosa nomina. See Augustin. Epist. xvi. p. 20.

† Cum factâ pace, turbæ Gentilium in Christianum nomen venire cupientes, hoc impedirentur, quod dies festos cum idolis suis solerent in abundantiâ epularum et ebrietate consumere, nec facilè ab his perniciosissimis et tam vetustissimis voluptatibus se possent abstinere, visum fuisse majoribus nostris, ut huic infirmitatis parti interim parceretur, diesque festos, post eos, quos relinquebant, alios in honorem sanctorum martyrum vel non simili sacrilegio, quamvis simili luxu celebrarentur. Augustin. Epist. xxix. p. 52.

‡ Gregory Nazianzen mentions the three kinds.

Οὐδ' ἱερὴν ἐπὶ δαῖτα γενέθλιον, ἠὲ θανόντος,
Ἤ τινα νυμφιδίην σὺν πλεονέσσι θεων. Carm. x.

were the most costly and magnificent. The former were of a more private nature; the poor were entertained at the cost of the married couple or the relatives of the deceased. The relationship of the martyrs extended to the whole Christian community, and united all in one bond of piety. They belonged, by a new tie of spiritual kindred, to the whole Church.

By a noble metaphor, the day of the martyrs' death was considered that of their birth to immortality; and their birthdays became the most sacred and popular festivals of the Church.* At their sepulchres†, or more frequently, as the public worship became more costly, in stately churches erected either over their sepulchres, or in some more convenient situation, but dedicated to their honour, these holy days commenced with the most impressive religious service. Hymns were sung in their praise (much of the early Christian poetry was composed for these occasions); the history of their lives and martyrdoms was read‡ (the legends which grew up into so fertile a subject for Christian

* Γενέθλια, natalitia. This custom was as early as the time of Polycarp. The day of his martyrdom was celebrated by the Church of Antioch. Euseb. lib. iv. 15. Compare Suicer, in voce γενέθλιον. Tertullian instances the offerings for the dead, and the annual celebration of the *birthdays* of the martyrs, as of Apostolic tradition. Oblationes pro defunctis, in natalibus annuâ die facimus. De Coron. Mil. c. 2. Compare Exhortat. ad Cast. c. 11. In the treatise de Monogamiâ, he considers it among the sacred duties of a faithful widow, offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus.

† At Antioch, the remains of St. Juventinus and St. Maximinus were placed in a sumptuous tomb, and honoured with an annual festival. Theodoret, E. H. iii. 15.

‡ The author of the Acts of Ignatius wrote them, in part that the day of his martyrdom might be duly honoured. Act. Martyr. Ign. apud Cotelerium, vol. ii. p. 161. Compare Acta St. Polycarpi.

mythic fable); panegyrical orations were delivered by the best preachers.* The day closed with an open banquet, in which all the worshippers were invited to partake. The wealthy Heathens had been accustomed to propitiate the manes of their departed friends by these costly festivals; the banquet was almost an integral part of the Heathen religious ceremony. The custom passed into the Church; and with the Pagan feeling, the festival assumed a Pagan character of gaiety and joyous excitement, and even of luxury.† In some places, the confluence of worshippers was so great that, as in the earlier, and indeed the more modern religions of Asia, the neighbourhood of the more celebrated churches of the martyrs became marts for commerce, and fairs were established on those holidays.‡

As the evening drew in, the solemn and religious

* There is a law of Theodosius the Great against selling the bodies of martyrs. Cod. Theod. ix. 17. 7.

† Lipsius considered these Agapæ derived from the Silicernium of the ancients. Ad Tac. Ann. vi. 5. Quod illa parentalia superstitioni Gentilium essent similia. Such is the observation of Ambrose apud Augustin. Conf. vi. 2. Boldetti, a good Roman Catholic and most learned antiquarian, observes on this and other usages adopted from Paganism,—Fu anchè sentimento de' prelati di chiesa di condescendere con ciò alla debelozza de' convertiti dal Gentilesimo, per istaccarli più soavemente dell' antichi superstizioni, non levando loro affetto ma bensì convertendo in buoni i loro divertimenti. Osservazioni, p. 46. Compare Marangoni's work "dei Cose Gentilesche."

‡ Already had the Montanist asceticism of Tertullian taken alarm at the abuse of the earlier festival, which had likewise degenerated from its pious use, and with his accustomed vehemence denounced the abuse of the Agapæ among the Catholics. Apud te Agape in sæculis fervet, fides in culinis calet, spes in ferculis jacet. Sed major his est Agape, quia per hanc adolescentes tui cum sororibus dormiunt, appendices scilicet gulæ, lascivia atque luxuria est. De Jejun. c. xvii.

There are many paintings in the catacombs representing Agapæ. Raoul Rochette, Mém. des Inscrip. p. 141. The author attributes to the Agapæ held in the cemeteries, many of the cups, glasses, &c. found in the catacombs.

BOOK IV.

thoughts gave way to other emotions; the wine flowed freely, and the healths of the martyrs were pledged, not unfrequently, to complete inebriety. All the luxuries of the Roman banquet were imperceptibly introduced. Dances were admitted, pantomimic spectacles were exhibited*, the festivals were prolonged till late in the evening, or to midnight, so that other criminal irregularities profaned, if not the sacred edifice, its immediate neighbourhood.

The bishops had for some time sanctioned these pious hilarities with their presence; they had freely partaken of the banquets, and their attendants were accused of plundering the remains of the feast, which ought to have been preserved for the use of the poor.†

But the scandals which inevitably arose out of these paganised solemnities awoke the slumbering vigilance of the more serious prelates. The meetings were gradually suppressed: they are denounced, with the strongest condemnation of the luxury and license with which they were celebrated in the church of Antioch, by Gregory of Na-

* Bottiger, in his prolusion on the four ages of the drama (Opera Lat. p. 326.), supposed, from a passage of St. Augustine, that there were scenic representations of the deaths of martyrs. Muller justly observes that the passage does not bear out this inference; and Augustine would scarcely have used such expressions unless of dances or mimes of less decent kind. Sanctum locum invaserat pestilentia et *petulantia* saltationis; per totam noctem cantabantur *nefaria*, et cantantibus saltabatur. August. in Natal. Cyprian. p. 311.

† See the poem of Greg. Naz. de Div. Vit. Gener. Jerome admits the gross evils which took place during these feasts, but ascribes them to the irregularities of a youthful people, which ought not to raise a prejudice against the religion, or even against the usage. The bishops were sometimes called νεκροδοροι, feasters on the dead.

zianzum* and by Chrysostom. They were authoritatively condemned by a canon of the Council of Laodicea.† In the West, they were generally held in Rome, and in other Italian cities, to a later period. The authority of Ambrose had discountenanced, if not entirely abolished, them in his diocese of Milan.‡ They prevailed to the latest time in the churches of Africa, where they were vigorously assailed by the eloquence of Augustine. The Bishop of Hippo appeals to the example of Italy and other parts of the West, in which they had never prevailed, and in which, wherever they had been known, they had been suppressed by common consent. But Africa did not surrender them without a struggle. The Manichean Faustus, in the ascetic spirit of his sect, taunts the orthodox with their idolatrous festivals. "You have but substituted your Agape for the sacrifices of the Heathen; in the place of their idols you have set up your martyrs, whom you worship with the same ceremonies as the Pagans their gods. You appease the manes of the dead with wine and with meat-offerings." The answer of Augustine indignantly repels the charge of idolatry, and takes refuge in the subtile distinction in the nature of the worship offered to the martyrs. "The reverence paid to martyrs is the same with that offered to holy men in this life, only offered more freely, because they have

* Carm. ccxviii., ccxix., and Oratio vi. Chrysostom, Hom. in. S. M. Julian.

† Conc. Harduin. t. i. p. 786.

‡ Ambros. de Jejun. c. xvii. Augustin. Confessiones, vi. 2.; see likewise Augustin. Epist. xxii. p. 28.

BOOK IV.

finally triumphed in their conflict. We adore God alone, we offer sacrifice to no martyr, or to the soul of any saint, or to any angel. * * Those who intoxicate themselves by the sepulchres of the martyrs are condemned by sound doctrine. It is a different thing to approve, and to tolerate till we can amend. The discipline of Christians is one thing, the sensuality of those who thus indulge in drunkenness and the infirmity of the weak is another."*

So completely, however, had they grown into the habits of the Christian community, that in many places they lingered on in obstinate resistance to the eloquence of the great teachers of Christianity. Even the Councils pronounced with hesitating and tardy severity the sentence of condemnation against these inveterate usages, to which the people adhered with such strong attachment. That of Carthage prohibited the attendance of
A. D. 397. the clergy, and exhorted them to persuade the people, as far as possible, to abstain from these festivals; that of Orleans condemns the singing,
A. D. 533. dancing, or dissolute behaviour, in churches; that

* Cont. Faust. lib. xx. c. xxi. One of the poems of St. Paulinus of Nola describes the general concourse to these festivals, and the riots which arose out of them.

Et nunc ecce frequentes
Per totam et vigiles extendunt gaudia noctem,
Lætitiâ somnos, tenebras funalibus arcent.
Verum utinam sanis agerent hæc gaudia votis,
Nec sua liminibus miscerent gaudia sanctis.
* * ignoscenda tamen puto talia parcis
Gaudia quæ ducant epulis, quia mentibus error
Irrepit rudibus, nec tantæ conscia culpæ
Simplicitas pietate cadit, male credula Sanctos
Perfusis halante mero gaudere sepulcris.
Carmen ix. in St. Felicem Martyrem.

of Agde (Sens) condemns secular music, the singing of women, and banquets, in that place of which "it is written that it is a house of prayer;" finally, that of Trulla, held in Constantinople, as late as the beginning of the eighth century, prohibits the decking of tables in churches (the prohibition indicates the practice): and at length it provoked a formal sentence of excommunication. A. D. 578.

Profane spectacles.

But notwithstanding all its efforts to divert and preoccupy the mind by these graver or at least primarily religious spectacles, the passion for theatrical amusements was too strong to be repressed by Christianity. It succeeded in some humane improvements, but, in some parts, it was obliged to yield to the ungovernable torrent. The populace of an empire threatened on all sides by dangerous enemies, oppressed by a remorseless tyranny, notwithstanding the remonstrances of a new and dominant religion, imperiously demanded, and recklessly enjoyed, their accustomed diversions.* In some places, that which had been a delight became a madness; and it was a Christian city which first displayed sedition and insurrection, whose streets ran with blood, from the rivalry of two factions in the circus. The older World was degenerate even in its diversions. It was not the nobler drama of Greece, or even that of Rome; neither the stately

* In the fifth century, Treves, four times desolated by the barbarians, no sooner recovered its freedom, than it petitioned for the games of the circus. Ubique facies captæ urbis, ubique terror captivitatis, ubique imago mortis, jacent reliquiæ infelicissimæ plebis super tumulos mortuorum suorum, et tu circenses rogas. Compare the whole passage, Salvian, de Gub. Dei, vi.

BOOK IV.

tragedy, nor even the fine comedy of manners, for which the mass of the people endured the stern remonstrances of the Christian orator; but spectacles of far less intellectual pretensions, and far more likely to be injurious to Christian morals. These, indeed, were not, as we shall show hereafter, entirely obsolete, but comparatively rare and unattractive.

Heathen calendar.

The Heathen calendar still regulated the amusements of the people.* Nearly 100 days in the year were set apart as festivals; the commencement of every month was dedicated to the public diversions. Besides these, there were extraordinary days of rejoicing, a victory, the birthday of the reigning Emperor, or the dedication of his statue by the prefect or the provincials of any city or district. On the accession of a new Emperor, processions always took place, which ended in the exhibition of games.† The dedication of statues to the Emperors by different cities, great victories, and other important

* The ordinary calendar of holidays, on which the courts of law did not sit, at the close of the fourth century, are given by Godefroy (note on the Cod. Theodos. lib. ii. viii. 11.).

Feriæ æstivæ (harvest)	xxx
Feriæ autumnales (vintage)	xxx
Kalendæ Januarii	iii
Natalitia urbis Romæ	i
urbis Constantin.	i
Paschæ	xv
Dies Solis[1], circiter	xli
Natalitia Imperatorum	iv
	cxxv

Christmas-day, Epiphany, and Pentecost, were not as yet general holidays.

† The Constantinian Calendar (Grævii Thesaur. viii.) reckons ninety-six days for the games, of which but few were peculiar to Rome. Muller, ii. p. 49.

[1] The other Sundays were comprised in the summer, autumnal, and Easter holidays.

events, were always celebrated with games. The Christians obtained a law from Theodosius, that games should be prohibited on the Lord's day. The African bishops, in the fifth Council of Carthage, petitioned that this prohibition might be extended to all Christian holidays. They urged that many members of the corporate bodies were obliged officially to attend on these occasions, and prevented from fulfilling their religious duties. The law of Theodosius the Elder had inhibited the celebration of games on Sundays*, one of the Younger Theodosius added at Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost, and directed that the theatres should be closed, not only to the Christians, but to the impious Jews and superstitious Pagans.† But, notwithstanding this law, which must have been imperfectly carried into execution, the indignant preachers still denounce the rivalry of the games, which withdrew so many of their audience.‡

The Theoretica.

The Theoretica or fund for the expenses of public shows and amusements, which existed not only in the two capitals, but in all the larger cities of the Empire, was first confiscated to the imperial treasury by Justinian; up to that time, the imperial policy had sanctioned and enforced this expenditure; and it is remarkable that this charge, which had been so long voluntarily borne by the ambition or the vanity of the higher orders, was first

* Cod. Theod. xv. v. 2.

† Cod. Theod. xv. t. 5. l. 5. A.D. 425. Muller, p. 50.

‡ See, for the earlier period, Apostolic Constit. ii. 60, 61, 62.; Theophyl. ad Autolyc. iii. p. 396.; for the later, Chrysostom, pæne passim, Hom. contra Am.; Hom. in princip. Act i. 58.; Hom. in Johann.

BOOK IV.

imposed as a direct tax on individuals by a Christian Emperor. By a law of Constantine, the Senate of Rome and of Constantinople were empowered to designate any person of a certain rank and fortune for the costly function of exhibiting games in these two great cities.* These were in addition to the spectacles exhibited by the consuls. In the other cities, decemvirs were nominated to this office.† The only exemptions were nonage, military or civil service, or a special indulgence from the Emperor. Men fled from their native cities to escape this onerous distinction. But if the charge was thrown on the treasury, the treasury could recover from the prætor or decemvir, besides assessing heavy fines for the neglect of the duty; and they were liable to be condemned to serve two years instead of one. In the Eastern provinces, this office had been joined with a kind of high-priesthood, such were the Asiarchs, the Syriarchs‡, the Bithyniarchs. The most distinguished men of the province had been proud of accepting the station of chief minister of the gods, at the expense of these sumptuous festivities. The office remained under the Christian Emperors §, but had

* Zosim. lib. ii. c. 38.

† See various laws of Constantius, regulating the office, the expenses, the fines imposed on the prætors, Cod. Theodos. vi. 3.; Laws i. 1—33. This shows the importance attached to the office. These munerarii, as well as the actors, were to do penance all their lives. Act. Conc. Illeb. can. 3. Compare Bingham, xvi. 4. 8. This same council condemned all who took the office of decemvir to a year's exclusion from the communion. Bingham, ubi supra.

‡ Malala, Chronograph, lib. xii. in art. Codex Theodos. vi. 3. 1.

§ The tribunus voluptatum appears as a title on a Christian tomb. Bosio, Roma Sotteranea, p. 106. Compare the observations of Bosio.

degenerated into a kind of purveyor for the public pleasures. A law of Theodosius enacted that this office should not be imposed on any one who refused to undertake it.* Another law, from which however, the Asiarchs were excluded, attempted to regulate the expenditure between the mean parsimony of some, and the prodigality of others.† Those who voluntarily undertook the office of exhibiting games were likewise exempted from this sumptuary law, for there were still some ambitious of this kind of popularity. They were proud of purchasing, at this enormous price, the honour of seeing their names displayed on tablets to the wondering multitude‡, and of being drawn in their chariots through the applauding city on the morning of the festival.

Throughout the empire, this passion prevailed in every city§, and in all classes. From early morning

* Cod. Theodos. xii. 1. 103. Compare the quotations from Libanius, in Godefroy's Commentary. There is a sumptuary law of Theodosius II. limiting the expenses: "Nec inconsulta plausorum insania curialium vires, fortunas civium, principalium domus, possessorum opes, reipublicæ robur evellant." The Alytarchs, Syriarchs, Asiarchs, and some others, are exempted from this Law. C. T. xv. 9. 2. In Italy, at a later period, the reign of Theodoric, the public games, were provided by the liberality of the Gothic sovereign: Beatitudo sit temporum lætitia populorum. Cassiodorus, epist. i. 20. The Epistles of Theodoric's minister are full of provisions and regulations for the celebration of the various kinds of games. Lib. i. epist. 20. 27. 30, 31, 32, 33., iii. 51., iv. 37. Theodoric espoused the green faction; he supported the pantomime. There were still tribuni voluptatum at Rome, vi. 6. Stipends were allowed to scenici, ix. 21.

† Symmachus, lib. x. epist. 28. 42. Compare Heyne, Opuscula, vi. p. 14.

‡ Basil, in Psal. 61. Prudent. Hamartigenia.

§ Muller names the following cities, besides the four great capitals, Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, in which the games are alluded to by ancient authors, Gortyna, Nicomedia, Laodicea, Tyre, Berytus, Cæsarea, Heliopolis, Gaza, Ascalon, Jerusa-

BOOK IV.

to late in the evening, the theatres were crowded in every part.* The artisan deserted his work, the merchant his shop, the slaves followed their masters, and were admitted into the vast circuit. Sometimes, when the precincts of the circus or amphitheatre were insufficient to contain the thronging multitudes, the adjacent hills were crowded with spectators, anxious to obtain a glimpse of the distant combatants, or to ascertain the colour of the victorious charioteer. The usages of the East and of the West differed as to the admission of women to these spectacles. In the East, they were excluded by the general sentiment from the theatre.† Nature itself, observes St. Chrysostom, enforces this prohibition.‡ It arose, not out of Christianity, but out of the manners of the East; it is alluded to not as a distinction, but as a general usage.§ Chrysostom laments that women, though they did not attend the games, were agitated by the factions of the circus.‖ In the West, the greater freedom of the Roman women had long asserted and still

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lem, Berea, Corinth, Cirta, Carthage, Syracuse, Catania, Milan, Aquileia, Ravenna, Mentz, Cologne, Treves, Arles. P. 53.

* Augustine, indeed, asserts, "per omnes ferè civitates cadunt theatra caveæ turpitudinum, et publicæ professiones flagitiorum. De Cons. Evangelist. c. 51.

† There are one or two passages of the Fathers opposed to this opinion. Tatian says, *τοῦς ὅπως δεῖ μοιχεύειν ἐπὶ τῆς σκήνης σοφιστεύοντας αἳ θυγάτερες ὕμων καὶοἳ παίδες θεωροῦσι.* c. 22. Clemens Alex. Strom. lib. iii.

‡ Chrys. Hom. 12. in Coloss. vol. ii. p. 417.

§ Procop. de Bell. Pers. l. c. 42.

‖ It was remarked as an extraordinary occurrence that, on the intelligence of the martyrdom of Gordius, matrons and virgins, forgetting their bashfulness, rushed to the theatre. Basil, vol. ii. p. 144. 147.

maintained this privilege.* It is well known that the vestal virgins had their seats of honour in the Roman spectacles, even those which might have been supposed most repulsive to feminine gentleness and delicacy; and the Christian preachers of the West remonstrate as strongly against the females as against the men, on account of their inextinguishable attachment to the public spectacles.

The more austere and ascetic Christian teachers condemned alike all these popular spectacles. From the avowed connection with Paganism, as to the time of their celebration †, their connection with the worship of Pagan deities, according to the accredited notion that all these deities were dæmons permitted to delude mankind, the theatre was considered a kind of temple of the Evil Spirit.‡ There were some, however, who openly vindicated these public exhibitions, and alleged the chariot of Elijah, the dancing of David, and the quotations of St. Paul from dramatic writers, as cases in point.

Four kinds of spectacles.

These public spectacles were of four kinds,

* Quæ pudica forsitan ad spectaculum matrona processerat, de spectaculo revertitur impudica. Ad Donat. Compare Augustine, de Civ. Dei, ii. 4. Quid juvenes aut virgines faciant, cum hæc et fieri sine pudore, et spectari libenter ab omnibus cernunt, admonentur, quid facere possent, inflammantur libidines, ac se quisque pro sexu in illis imaginibus præfigurat, corruptiores ad cubicula revertuntur. Lact. Div. Instit. xv. 6. 31.

† Dubium enim non est, quod lædunt Deum, utpote idolis consecratæ. Colitur namque et honoratur Minerva in gymnasiis, Venus in theatris, Neptunus in circis, Mars in arenis, Mercurius in palæstris. Salvian, lib. vi.

A fair collection of the denunciations of the Fathers against theatrical amusements may be found in Mamachi, de' Costumi de' Primitivi Cristiani, ii. p. 150. et seqq.

‡ See the book de Spect. attributed to St. Cyprian.

BOOK IV.

independent of the common and more vulgar exhibitions, juggling, rope-dancing, and tumbling.*

Gymnastic games.

I. The old gymnastic games. The Olympic games survived in Greece till the invasion of Alaric.† Antioch likewise celebrated this quinquennial festivity; youths of station and rank exhibited themselves as boxers and wrestlers. These games were also retained at Rome and in parts of Africa‡: it is uncertain whether they were introduced into Constantinople. The various passages of Chrysostom which allude to them probably were delivered in Antioch. Something of the old honour adhered to the wrestlers and performers in these games: they either were, or were supposed to be, of respectable station and unblemished character. The herald advanced into the midst of the arena and made his proclamation, "that any man should come forward who had any charge against any one of the men about to appear before them, as a thief, a slave, or of bad reputation."§

Tragedy and comedy.

II. Theatrical exhibitions, properly so called. The higher tragedy and comedy were still represented on the inauguration of the consuls at Rome.

* Compare the references to Chrysostom's works on the rope dancers, jugglers, &c. in Montfaucon, Diatribe, p. 194.

† Liban. de Vocat. ad Festa Olympiæ.

Cuncta Palæmoniis manus explorata coronis
Adsit, et Eleo pubes laudata tonanti.

Claudian, de Fl. Mal. C[illegible]s. 288.

This, however, may be poetic reminiscence. These exhibitions are described as conducted with greater decency and order (probably because they awoke less passionate interest) than those of the circus or theatre.

‡ They were restored in Africa, by a law of Gratian, A.D. 376. Cod. Theod. xv. 7. 3.

§ Compare Montfaucon's Diatribe, p. 194.

Claudian names actors of the sock and buskin, the performers of genuine comedy and tragedy, as exhibited on the occasion of the consulship of Mallius.* During the triumph of the Christian Emperors Theodosius and Arcadius, the theatre of Pompey was filled by chosen actors from all parts of the world. Two actors in tragedy and comedy† are named as standing in the same relation to each other as the famous Æsopus and the comic Roscius. Prudentius speaks of the tragic mask as still in use; and it appears that females acted those parts in Terence which were formerly represented by men.‡ The youthful mind of Augustine took delight in being agitated by the fictitious sorrows of the stage.§ Nor was this higher branch of the art extinct in the East: tragic and comic actors are named, with other histrionic performers, in the orations of Chrysostom‖, and there are allusions in Libanius to mythological tragic fables and to the comedies of Menander.¶ But as these representations, after they had ceased to be integral parts of the Pagan worship, were less eagerly denounced by the Christian teachers**, the comparatively

* Qui pulpita socco
Personat, aut altè graditur majore cothurno,
In Cons. Mall. 313.
Pompeiana proscenia delectis actoribus personarent.
Symmach. lib. x. ep. 29.

† Publius Pollio and Ambivius. Symmach. epist. x. 2.

‡ Donatus in Andriam, act. iv. sc. 3.

§ Confess. iii. 2.

‖ Chrysostom, Hom. 10. in Coloss. v. ii. p. 403.; Hom. 6. in Terræ mot. i. 780., i. p. 38. i. 731.

¶ Liban. vol. ii. p. 375.

** Lactantius inveighs with all the energy of the first ages against tragedy and comedy: — Tragicæ historiæ subjiciunt oculis patricidia et incesta regum malorum, et cothurnata scelera demonstrant. Comicæ de stupris virginum et am-

BOOK IV.

slight and scanty notices in their writings, almost our only records of the manners of the time, by no means prove the infrequency of these representations; though it is probable, for other reasons, that the barbarous and degraded taste was more gratified by the mimes and pantomimes, the chariot races of the circus, and the wild-beasts in the amphitheatre.* But tragedy and comedy, at this period, were probably maintained rather to display the magnificence of the consul or prætor, who prided himself on the variety of his entertainments, and were applauded, perhaps †, by professors of rhetoric, and a few faithful admirers of antiquity, rather than by the people at large. Some have supposed that the tragedies written on religious subjects in the time of Julian were represented on the stage; but there is no ground for this notion; these were intended as school books, to supply the place of Sophocles and Menander.

Mimes.

In its degeneracy, the higher Drama had long been supplanted by,—1st, the Mimes. Even this kind of drama, perhaps, of Roman, or even of earlier Italian origin, had degenerated into the coarsest scurrility, and, it should seem, the most repulsive indecency. Formerly it had been the representation of some inci-

citiis meretricum, et quo magis sunt eloquentes, eo magis persuadent, faciliùs inhærent memoriæ versus numerosi et ornati. Instit. vi. 20.

* Augustine, however, draws a distinction between these two classes of theatric representations and the lower kind: — Scenicorum tolerabiliora ludorum, comœdiæ scilicet et tragœdiæ, hoc est fabulæ poëtarum, agendæ in spectaculo m⁻¹tâ rerum turpitudine, sed nullâ saltem, sicut aliæ multæ, verborum obscenitate compositæ, quas etiam inter studia, quæ liberalia vocantur, pueri legere et discere coguntur a senibus. De Civ. Dei, lib. ii. c. 8.

† Muller, p. 139.

dent in common life, extemporaneously dramatised by the mime, ludicrous in its general character, mingled at times with sharp or even grave and sententious satire. Such were the mimes of Laberius, to which republican Rome had listened with delight. It was now the lowest kind of buffoonery. The mime, or several mimes, both male and female, appeared in ridiculous dresses, with shaven crowns, and pretending still to represent some kind of story, poured forth their witless obscenity, and indulged in all kinds of practical jokes and manual wit, blows on the face and broken heads. The music was probably the great charm, but that had become soft, effeminate, and lascivious. The female performers were of the most abandoned character *, and scenes were sometimes exhibited of the most abominable indecency, even if we do not give implicit credit to the malignant tales of Procopius concerning the exhibitions of the Empress Theodora, when she performed as a dancing girl in these disgusting mimes. †

The Pantomime was a kind of ballet in action. ‡ Pantomimes.

* Many passages of Chrysostom might be quoted, in which he speaks of the naked courtesans, meaning probably with the most transparent clothing (though women were exhibited at Antioch swimming in an actual state of nudity), who performed in these mimes. The more severe Christian preacher is confirmed by the language of the Heathen Zosimus, whose bitter hatred to Christianity induces him to attribute their most monstrous excesses to the reign of the Christian Emperor. Μῖμοι τε γὰρ γελοίων, καὶ οἱ κακῶς ἀπολούμενοι ὀρχήσταί, καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι πρὸς αἰσχρότητα καὶ τὴν ἄτοπον ταύτην καὶ ἐκμελῆ συντελεῖ μουσικῆν, ἠσκήθη τε ἐπὶ τούτου. Lib. iv. c. 33.

† Muller, 92. 103.

‡ Libanius is indignant that men should attempt to confound the orchestæ or pantomimes with these degraded and infamous mimes. Vol. iii. p. 350. The pantomimes wore masks, the mimes had their faces uncovered, and usually had shaven crowns.

BOOK IV.

It was the mimic representation of all the old tragic and mythological fables, without words *, or intermingled with chaunts or songs. † These exhibitions were got up at times with great splendour of scenery, which was usually painted on hanging curtains, and with musical accompaniments of the greatest variety. The whole cycle of mythology ‡, both of the gods and heroes, was represented by the dress and mimic gestures of the performer. The deities, both male and female, — Jupiter, Pluto, and Mars; Juno, Proserpine, Venus; Theseus and Hercules; Achilles, with all the heroes of the Trojan war; Phædra, Briseis, Atalanta, the race of Œdipus; these are but a few of the dramatic personages which, on the authority of Libanius §, were personated by the pantomimes of the East. Sidonius Apollinaris ‖ fills twenty-five lines with those represented in the West by the celebrated dancers Caramalus and Phabaton. ¶ These included the old fables of Medea and Jason, of the house of Thyestes, of Tereus and Philomela, Jupiter and Europa, and Danae, and Leda, and Ganymede, Mars and Venus, Perseus and Andromeda. In the West, the female parts here exhibited were

* The pantomimi or dancers represented their parts,—

Clausis faucibus et loquente gestu
Nutu, crure, genu, manu, rotatu. Sid. Ap'l.

† There was sometimes a regular chorus, with instrumental music. Sid. Apoll. xxiii. 268., and probably poetry composed for the occasion. Muller, p. 122.

‡ Greg. Nyssen. in Galland. Bibliothec. Patrum, vi. p. 610. Ambrose, in Hexaem. iii. 1. 5. Synes. de Prov. ii. p. 128. ed. Petav. Symmach. i. ep. 89.

§ Liban. pro Salt. v. iii 391.

‖ Sidon. Apoll. carm. xxiii. v. 267. 299.

¶ Claudian mentions a youth, who, before the pit, which thundered with applause, —

Aut rigidam Niobem aut flentem Troada fingit.

likewise represented by women* of whom there were no less than 3000 in Rome†: and so important were these females considered to the public amusement, that, on the expulsion of all strangers from the city during a famine, an exception was made by the prætor, in deference to the popular wishes, in favour of this class alone. The profession, however, was considered infamous, and the indecency of their attire upon the public stage justified the low estimate of their moral character. Their attractions were so dangerous to the Roman youth, that a special law prohibited the abduction of these females from their public occupation, whether the enamoured lover withdrew one of them from the stage as a mistress, or, as not unfrequently happened, with the more honourable title of wife.‡ The East, though it sometimes endured the appearance of women in those parts, often left them to be performed by boys, yet with any thing but advantage to general morality. The aversion of Christianity to the subjects exhibited by the pantomimes, almost invariably moulded up as they were with Paganism, as well as its high moral sense (united, perhaps, with something of the disdain of ancient Rome for the histrionic art, which it patronised nevertheless with inexhaustible ardour), branded the performers with the deepest mark of public contempt. They were, as it were, public

* Even in Constantinople, women acted in the pantomimes. Chrysostom, Hom. 6., in Thessalon., denounces the performance of Phædra and Hippolitus, by women:—*Ὥσπερ σώματος τυπῶ φαινομένας.*

† Ammian. Marcell., xiv. 6.

‡ Cod. Theodos. xv. 7. 5.

slaves, and could not abandon their profession.* They were considered unfit to mingle with respectable society; might not appear in the forum or basilica, or use the public baths; they were excluded even from the theatre as spectators, and might not be attended by a slave, with a folding-stool for their use. Even Christianity appeared to extend its mercies and its hopes to this devoted race with some degree of rigour and jealousy. The actor baptized in the apparent agony of death, if he should recover, could not be forced back upon the stage; but the guardian of the public amusements was to take care, lest, by pretended sickness, the actor should obtain this precious privilege of baptism, and thus exemption from his servitude. Even the daughters of actresses partook of their mothers' infamy, and could only escape being doomed to their course of life by the profession of Christianity, ratified by a certain term of probationary virtue. If the actress relapsed from Christianity, she was invariably condemned to her impure servitude.†

Such was the general state of the theatrical exhibitions in the Roman empire at that period. The higher drama, like every other intellectual and inventive art, had to undergo the influence of Christianity before it could revive in its splendid and prolific energy. In all European countries, the Christian mystery, as it was called, has been the parent of tragedy, perhaps of comedy. It reappeared

* Cod. Theodos. xv. 13.

† Cod. Theodos. de Scenicis, xv. 7. 2. 4. 8. 9.

as a purely religious representation, having retained no remembrance whatever of Paganism; and was at one period, perhaps, the most effective teacher, in times of general ignorance and total scarcity of books, both among priests and people, of Christian history as well as of Christian legend.

But at a later period, the old hereditary hostility of Christianity to the theatre has constantly revived. The passages of the Fathers have perpetually been repeated by the more severe preachers, whether fairly applicable or not to the dramatic entertainments of different periods; and in general it has had the effect of keeping the actor in a lower caste of society; a prejudice often productive of the evil which it professed to correct; for men whom the general sentiment considers of a low moral order will rarely make the vain attempt of raising themselves above it: if they cannot avoid contempt, they will care little whether they deserve it.

Amphitheatre. Gladiatorial shows.

III. The Amphitheatre, with its shows of gladiators and wild-beasts. The suppression of those bloody spectacles, in which human beings slaughtered each other by hundreds for the diversion of their fellow men, is one of the most unquestionable and proudest triumphs of Christianity. The gladiatorial shows, strictly speaking, that is, the mortal combats of men, were never introduced into the less warlike East, though the combats of men with wild-beasts were exhibited in Syria and other parts. They were Roman in their origin, and to their termination. It might seem that the pride of Roman conquest

BOOK IV.

was not satisfied with the execution of her desolating mandates, unless the whole city witnessed the bloodshed of her foreign captives; and in her decline she seemed to console herself with these sanguinary proofs of her still extensive empire: the ferocity survived the valour of her martial spirit. Barbarian life seemed, indeed, to be of no account, but to contribute to the sports of the Roman. The humane Symmachus, even at this late period*, reproves the *impiety* of some Saxon captives, who, by strangling themselves in prison, escaped the ignominy of this public exhibition.† It is an humiliating consideration to find how little Roman civilisation had tended to mitigate the ferocity of manners and of temperament. Not merely did women crowd the amphitheatre during the combats of these fierce and almost naked savages or criminals, but it was the especial privilege of the vestal virgin, even at this late period, to give the signal for the mortal blow, to watch the sword driven deeper into the palpitating entrails.‡ The state of uncontrolled frenzy worked up even the most sober

* Quando prohibuisset privatâ custodiâ desperatæ gentis *impias* manus, cum viginti novem fractas sine laqueo fauces primus ludi gladiatorii dies viderit. Symmach. lib. ii. epist. 46.

† It is curious that at one time the exposure to wild beasts was considered a more ignominious punishment than fighting as a gladiator. The slave was condemned to the former for kidnapping; the freeman to the latter. Codex Theod. iv. 18. 1.

‡ Virgo — consurgit ad ictus,
Et quotiens victor ferrum jugulo inserit, illa
Delicias ait esse suas, pectusque jacentis
Virgo modesta jubet, converso pollice, rumpi;
Ni lateat pars ulla animæ vitalibus imis,
Altiùs impresso dum palpitat ense secutor.
Prudent. adv. Sym. ii. 1095.

spectators. The manner in which this contagious passion for bloodshed engrossed the whole soul is described with singular power and truth by St. Augustine. A Christian student of the law was compelled by the importunity of his friends to enter the amphitheatre. He sate with his eyes closed, and his mind totally abstracted from the scene. He was suddenly startled from his trance by a tremendous shout from the whole audience. He opened his eyes, he could not but gaze on the spectacle. Directly he beheld the blood, his heart imbibed the common ferocity; he could not turn away; his eyes were riveted on the arena; and the interest, the excitement, the pleasure, grew into complete intoxication. He looked on, he shouted, he was inflamed; he carried away from the amphitheatre an irresistible propensity to return to its cruel enjoyments.*

Christianity began to assail this deep-rooted passion of the Roman world with caution, almost with timidity. Christian Constantinople was never defiled with the blood of gladiators. In the same year as that of the Council of Nice, a local edict was issued, declaring the Emperor's disapprobation of these sanguinary exhibitions in time of peace, and prohibiting the volunteering of men as gladiators.† This was a considerable step, if we call to mind the careless apathy with which Constantine, before his conversion, had exhibited all his barbarian captives in the amphitheatre at Treves.‡

* August. Conf. vi. 8.

† Codex Theodos. xv. 12. 1.

‡ See vol. ii. p. 355.

BOOK IV.

This edict, however, addressed to the prefect of Phœnicia, had no permanent effect, for Libanius, several years after, boasts that he had not been a spectator of the gladiatorial shows still regularly celebrated in Syria. Constantius prohibited soldiers, and those in the imperial service (Palatini), from hiring themselves out to the Lanistæ, the keepers of gladiators.* Valentinian decreed that no Christian or Palatine should be condemned for any crime whatsoever to the arena.† An early edict of Honorius prohibited any slave who had been a gladiator‡ from being admitted into the service of a man of senatorial dignity. But Christianity now began to speak in a more courageous and commanding tone.§ The Christian poet urges on the Christian Emperor the direct prohibition of these inhuman and disgraceful exhibitions‖: but a single act often affects the public mind much more strongly than even the most eloquent and reiterated exhortation. An Eastern monk, named Telemachus, travelled all the way to Rome, in order to protest against those disgraceful barbarities. In his noble enthusiasm, he leaped into the arena to separate the combatants; either with the sanction of the prefect, or that of the infuriated

* Codex Theodos. xv. 12. 2.
† Ibid. ix. 40. 8.
‡ Codex Theodos., ix. 40. 8.
§ Ibid. xv. 12. 3.
‖ Arripe dilatam tua, dux, in tempora famam,
Quodque patri superest, successor laudis habeto.
Ille urbem vetuit taurorum sanguine tingi,
Tu mortes miserorum hominum prohibete litari:
Nullus in urbe cadat, cujus sit pœna voluptas,
Nec sua virginitas oblectet cædibus ora.
Jam solis contenta feris infamis arena,
Nulla cruentatis homicidia ludat in armis.
Prudent. adv. Symm. ii. 1121.

assembly, he was torn to pieces, the martyr of Christian humanity.* The impression of this awful scene, of a Christian, a monk, thus murdered in the arena, was so profound, that Honorius issued a prohibitory edict, putting an end to these bloody shows. This edict, however, only suppressed the mortal combats of men†; the less inhuman, though still brutalising, conflicts of men with wild-beasts seems scarcely to have been abolished‡ till the diminution of wealth, and the gradual contraction of the limits of the empire, cut off both the supply and the means of purchasing these costly luxuries. The revolted or conquered provinces of the South, the East, and the North, no longer rendered up their accustomed tribute of lions from Libya, leopards from the East, dogs of remarkable ferocity from Scotland, of crocodiles and bears, and every kind of wild and rare animal. The Emperor Anthemius prohibited the lamentable spectacles of wild-beasts on the Sunday; and Salvian still inveighs against those bloody exhibitions. And this amusement gradually degenerated, if the word may be used,

* Theodoret, v. 26.

† The law of Honorius is not extant in the Theodosian code, which only retains those of Constantine and Constantius. For this reason, doubts have been thrown on the authority of Theodoret; but there is no recorded instance of gladiatorial combats *between man and man* since this period. The passage of Salvian, sometimes alleged, refers to combats with wild-beasts. — Ubi summum deliciarum genus est mori homines, aut quod est mori graviùs acerbiùsque, lacerari, expleri ferarum alvos humanis carnibus, comedi homines cum circumstantium lætitiâ, conspicientium voluptate. De Gub. Dei, lib. vi. p. 51.

‡ Quicquid monstriferis nutrit Gætulia campis,
Alpinâ quicquid tegitur nive, Gallica quicquid
Silva timet, jaceat. Largo ditescat arena
Sanguine, consumant totos spectacula montes.
Claud. in Cons. Mall. 306.

BOOK IV.

not so much from the improving humanity, as from the pusillanimity of the people. Arts were introduced to irritate the fury of the beast, without endangering the person of the combatant, which would have been contemptuously exploded in the more warlike days of the Empire. It became a mere exhibition of skill and agility. The beasts were sometimes tamed before they were exhibited. In the West, those games seem to have sunk with the Western empire*; in the East, they lingered on so as to require a special prohibition by the Council of Trulla at Constantinople, at the close of the seventh century.

The circus. Chariot races.

IV. The chariot race of the circus. If these former exhibitions were prejudicial to the modesty and humanity of the Roman people, the chariot races were no less fatal to their peace. This frenzy did not, indeed, reach its height till the middle of the fifth century, when the animosities of political and religious difference were outdone by factions enlisted in favour of the rival charioteers in the circus. As complete a separation took place in society; adverse parties were banded against each other in as fierce opposition; an insurrection as destructive and sanguinary took place; the throne of the Emperor was as fearfully shaken, in the collision of the blue and green factions, as ever took place in defence of the sacred rights of liberty or of faith. Constantinople seemed to concentre on the circus all that

* Agincourt, Histoire de l'Art, is of opinion that Theodoric substituted military games for theatrical shows, and that these military games were the origin of the tournaments. The wild beast shows were still celebrated at Rome. Cassiod. Epist. v. 42.

absorbing interest, which at Rome was divided by many spectacles. The Christian city seemed to compensate itself for the excitement of those games which were prohibited by the religion, by the fury with which it embraced those which were allowed, or rather against which Christianity remonstrated in vain. Her milder tone of persuasiveness, and her more authoritative interdiction, were equally disregarded, where the sovereign and the whole people yielded to the common frenzy. But this consolation remained to Christianity, that when it was accused of distracting the imperial city with religious dissension, it might allege, that this at least was a nobler subject of difference; or rather, that the passions of men seized upon religious distinctions with no greater eagerness than they did on these competitions for the success of a chariot driver, in a blue or a green jacket, in order to gratify their inextinguishable love of strife and animosity.

CHAP. III.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

Christianity was extensively propagated in an age in which Greek and Latin literature had fallen into hopeless degeneracy; nor could even its spirit awaken the dead. Both these languages had already attained and passed their full developement; they had fulfilled their part in the imaginative and intellectual advancement of mankind; and it seems, in general, as much beyond the power of the genius of a country, as of an individual, to renew its youth. It was not till it had created new languages, or rather till languages had been formed in which the religious notions of Christianity were an elementary and constituent part, that Christian literature assumed its free and natural dignity.

The genius of the new religion never coalesced in perfect and amicable harmony with either the Greek or the Latin tongue. In each case it was a foreign dialect introduced into a fully-formed and completely organised language. The Greek, notwithstanding its exquisite pliancy, with difficulty accommodated itself to the new sentiments and opinions. It had either to endure the naturalisation of new words, or to deflect its own terms to new significations. In the latter case, the doctrines were endangered, in the former, the purity of the language, more especially since the Oriental writers were in general alien to the Grecian mind. The Greek lan-

guage had indeed long before yielded to the contaminating influences of Barbarism. From Homer to Demosthenes, it had varied in its style and character, but had maintained its admirable perfection, as the finest, the clearest, and most versatile instrument of poetry, oratory, or philosophy. But the conquests of Greece were as fatal to her language as to her liberties. The Macedonian, the language of the conquerors, was not the purest Greek*, and in general, by the extension over a wider surface, the stream contracted a taint from every soil over which it flowed. Alexandria was probably the best school of foreign Grecian style, at least in literature; in Syria it had always been infected in some degree by the admixture of Oriental terms. The Hellenistic style, as it has been called, of the New Testament, may be considered a fair example of the language, as it was spoken in the provinces among persons of no high degree of intellectual culture.

Degeneracy. Fate of Greek literature and language.

The Latin seemed no less to have fulfilled its mission, and to have passed its culminating point, in the verse of Virgil and the prose of Cicero. Its stern and masculine majesty, its plain and practical vigour, seemed as if it could not outlive the republican institutions, in the intellectual conflicts of which it had been formed. The impulse of the old freedom carried it through the reign of Augustus, but no further; and it had undergone rapid and progressive deterioration before it was called upon to discharge its second office of disseminating and preserving the Christianity of the West; and the

Of Roman.

* Compare the dissertation of Sturz on the Macedonian dialect, reprinted in the prolegomena to Valpy's edition of Stephens' Thesaurus.

BOOK IV.

Latin, like the Greek, had suffered by its own triumphs. Among the more distinguished Heathen writers, subsequent to Augustus, the largest number were of provincial origin; and something of their foreign tone still adhered to their style. Of the best Latin Christian writers, it is remarkable that not one was a Roman, not one, except Ambrose, an Italian. Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius (perhaps Lactantius), and Augustine were Africans; the Roman education, and superior understanding of the latter, could not altogether refine away that rude provincialism which darkened the whole language of the former. The writings of Hilary are obscured by another dialect of Barbarism. Even at so late a period, whatever exceptions may be made to the taste of his conceptions and of his imagery, with some limitation, the *Roman* style of Claudian, and the structure of his verse, carries us back to the time of Virgil; in Prudentius, it is not merely the inferiority of the poet, but something foreign and uncongenial refuses to harmonise with the adopted poetic language.*

Christian literature.

Yet it was impossible that such an enthusiasm could be disseminated through the empire without in some degree awakening the torpid languages. The mind could not be so deeply stirred without expressing itself with life and vigour, even if with diminished elegance and dignity. No one can compare the energetic sentences of Chrysostom

* Among the most remarkable productions as to Latinity are the Ecclesiastical History and Life of St. Martin of Tours by Sulpicius Severus; the legendary matter of which contrasts singularly with the perspicuous and almost classical elegance of the style. See post, on Minucius Felix.

with the prolix and elaborate, if more correct, periods of Libanius, without acknowledging that a new principle of vitality has been infused into the language.

But in fact the ecclesiastical Greek and Latin are new dialects of the ancient tongue. Their literature stands entirely apart from that of Greece or Rome. The Greek already possessed the foundation of this literature in the Septuagint version of the Old, and in the original of the New Testament. The Vulgate of Jerome, which almost immediately superseded the older imperfect or inaccurate versions from the Greek, supplied the same groundwork to Latin Christendom. There is something singularly rich and, if we may so speak, picturesque in the Latin of the Vulgate; the Orientalism of the Scripture is blended up with such curious felicity with the idiom of the Latin, that, although far removed either from the colloquial language of the comedians, or the purity of Cicero, it both delights the ear and fills the mind. It is an original and somewhat foreign, but likewise an expressive and harmonious dialect.* It has no doubt powerfully influenced the religious style, not merely of the later Latin writers, but those of the modern languages of which Latin is the parent. Constantly quoted,

* There appears to me more of the Oriental character in the Old Testament of the Vulgate than in the LXX. That translation having been made by Greeks, or by Jews domiciled in a Greek city, the Hebrew style seems subdued, as far as possible, to the Greek. Jerome seems to have endeavoured to Hebraise or Orientalise his Latin.

The story of Jerome's nocturnal flagellation for his attachment to profane literature rests (as we have seen) on his own authority; but his later works show that the offending spirit was not effectively scourged out of him.

BOOK IV.

either in its express words, or in terms approaching closely to its own, it contributed to form the dialect of ecclesiastical Latin, which became the religious language of Europe; and as soon as religion condescended to employ the modern languages in its service, was transfused as a necessary and integral part of that which related to religion. Christian literature was as yet purely religious in its scope; though it ranged over the whole field of ancient poetry, philosophy, and history, its sole object was the illustration or confirmation of Christian opinion.

Poetry.

For many ages, and indeed as long as it spoke the ancient languages, it was barren of poetry in all its loftier departments, at least of that which was poetry in form as well as in spirit.

The religion itself was the *poetry* of Christianity. The sacred books were to the Christians what the national epic, and the sacred lyric had been to the other races of antiquity. They occupied the place, and proscribed in their superior sanctity, or defied by their unattainable excellence, all rivalry. The Church succeeded to the splendid inheritance of the Hebrew temple and synagogue. The Psalms and the Prophets, if they departed somewhat from their original simple energy and grandeur in the uncongenial and too polished languages of the Greeks and Romans, still, in their imagery, their bold impersonations, the power and majesty of their manner, as well as in the sublimity of the notions of divine power and wisdom, with which they were instinct, stood alone in the religious poetry of mankind.

CHAP. III.

Sacred writings.

The religious books of Christianity, though of a gentler cast, and only in a few short passages (and in the grand poetic drama of the Revelations) poetical in their form, had much, especially in their narratives, of the essence of poetry; the power of awakening kindred emotions; the pure simplicity of truth, blended with imagery and with language, which kindled the fancy. Faith itself was constantly summoning the imagination to its aid, to realise, to impersonate those scenes which were described in the sacred volume, and which it was thus enabled to embrace with greater fervour and sincerity. All the other early Christian poetry was pale and lifeless in comparison with that of the sacred writers. Some few hymns, as the noble Te Deum ascribed to Ambrose, were admitted, with the Psalms, and the short lyric passages in the New Testament, the Magnificat, the Nunc Dimittis, and the Alleluia, into the services of the Church. But the sacred volume commanded exclusive adoration not merely by its sanctity, but by its unrivalled imagery and sweetness. Each sect had its hymns; and those of the Gnostics, with the rival strains of the orthodox churches of Syria, attained great popularity. But in general these compositions were only a feebler echo of the strong and vivid sounds of the Hebrew psalms. The epic and tragic form into which, in the time of Julian, the scripture narratives were cast, in order to provide a Christian Homer and Euripides for those schools in which the originals were interdicted, were probably but cold paraphrases, the Hebrew poetry

BOOK IV.

expressed in an incongruous cento of the Homeric or tragic phraseology. The garrulous feebleness of Gregory's own poem does not awaken any regret for the loss of those writings either of his own composition or of his age.* Even in the martyrdoms, the noblest unoccupied subjects for Christian verse, the poetry seems to have forced its way into the legend, rather than animated the writer of verse. Prudentius — whose finest lines (and they are sometimes of a very spirited, sententious, and eloquent, if not poetic cast) occur in his other poems, on these which would appear at first far more promising subjects is sometimes pretty and fanciful, but scarcely more.†

* The Greek poetry after Nazianzen was almost silent; some perhaps, of the hymns are ancient (one particularly in Routh's Reliquiæ). See likewise Smith's account of the Greek church. The hymns of Synesius are very interesting as illustrative of the state of religious sentiment, and by no means without beauty. But may we call these dreamy Platonic raptures Christian poetry?

† One of the best, or rather perhaps *prettiest*, passages, is that which has been selected as a hymn for the Innocents' day: —

Salvete flores martyrum
Quos lucis ipso in limine,
Christi insecutor sustulit
Ceu turbo nascentes rosas.
Vos, prima Christi victima,
Grex immolatorum tener,
Aram ante ipsam simplices
Palma et coronis luditis.

But these are only a few stanzas out of a long hymn on the Epiphany. The best verses in Prudentius are to be found in the books against Symmachus; but their highest praise is that, in their force and energy, they *approach* to Claudian. With regard to Claudian, I cannot refrain from repeating what I have stated in another place, as it is so closely connected with the subject of Christian poetry. M. Beugnot has pointed out one remarkable characteristic of Claudian's poetry and of the times — his extraordinary religious indifference. Here is a poet writing at the actual crisis of the complete triumph of the new religion, and the visible extinction of the old: if we may so speak, a strictly historical poet, whose works, excepting his mythological poem on the rape of Proserpine, are confined to temporary subjects, and to the politics of his own eventful times; yet, excepting in one or two small and indifferent pieces, manifestly written by a Christian, and interpolated among his poems, there is no allusion whatever to the great religious strife. No one would know the existence of Christianity

There is more of the essence of poetry in the simpler and unadorned Acts of the Martyrs, more

CHAP. III.

at that period of the world by reading the works of Claudian. His panegyric and his satire preserve the same religious impartiality; award their most lavish praise or their bitterest invective on Christian or Pagan: he insults the fall of Eugenius, and glories in the victories of Theodosius. Under his child, — and Honorius never became more than a child,— Christianity continued to inflict wounds more and more deadly on expiring Paganism. Are the gods of Olympus agitated with apprehension at the birth of their new enemy? They are introduced as rejoicing at his appearance, and promising long years of glory. The whole prophetic choir of Paganism, all the oracles throughout the world, are summoned to predict the felicity of his reign. His birth is compared to that of Apollo, but the narrow limits of an island must not confine the new *deity* —

Non littora nostro
Sufficerent angusta *Deo*.

Augury, and divination, the shrines of Ammon and of Delphi, the Persian magi, the Etruscan seers, the Chaldean astrologers, the Sibyl herself, are described as still discharging their poetic functions, and celebrating the natal day of this Christian prince. They are noble lines, as well as curious illustrations of the times: —

Quæ tunc documenta futuri?
Quæ voces avium? quanti per inane volatus?
Quis vatum discursus erat? Tibi corniger Ammon,
Et dudum taciti rupêre silentia Delphi.
Te Persæ cecinêre Magi, te sensit Etruscus
Augur, et inspectis Babylonius horruit astris:
Chaldæi stupuêre senes, Cumanaque rursus
Intonuit rupes, rabidæ delubra Sibyllæ.

Note on Gibbon, v. 249.

But *Roman* poetry expired with Claudian. In the vast mass of the Christian Latin poetry of this period, independent of the perpetual faults against metre and taste, it is impossible not to acknowledge that the subject matter appears foreign, and irreconcileable with the style of the verse. Christian images and sentiments, the frequent biblical phrases and expressions, are not yet naturalised; and it is almost impossible to select any passage of considerable length from the whole cycle, which can be offered as poetry. I except a few of the hymns, and even, as to the hymns (setting aside the Te Deum), parodoxical as it may sound, I cannot but think the later and more barbarous the best. There is nothing in my judgment to be compared with the monkish "Dies iræ, Dies illa," or even the "Stabat Mater."

I am inclined to select, as a favourable specimen of Latin poetry, the following almost unknown lines (they are not in the earlier editions of Dracontius). I have three reasons for my selection: 1. The real merit of the verses compared to most of the Christian poetry; 2. Their opposition to the

BOOK IV.

pathos, occasionally more grandeur, more touching incident and expression, and even, we may ven-

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prevailing tenet of celibacy, for which cause they are quoted by Theiner; 3. The interest which early poetry on this subject (Adam in Paradise) must possess to the countrymen of Milton.

Tunc oculos per cuncta jacit, miratur amœnum
Sic florere locum, sic puros fontibus amnes,
Quatuor undisonas stringenti gurgite ripas,
Ire per arboreos saltus, camposque virentes
Miratur; sed quid sit homo, quos factus ad usus
Scire cupit simplex, et non habet, unde requirat;
Quo merito sibimet data sit possessio mundi,
Et domus alma nemus per florea regna paratum:
Ac procul expectat virides jumenta per agros;
Et de se tacitus, quæ sint hæc cuncta, requirit,
Et quare secum non sint hæc ipsa, volutat:
Nam consorte carens, cum quo conferret, egebat.
Viderat Omnipotens, hæc illum corde moventem,
Et miseratus ait: Demus adjutoria facto;
Participem generis: tanquam si diceret auctor,
Non solum decet esse virum, consortia blanda
Noverit, uxor erit, quum sit tamen ille maritus,
Conjugium se quisque vocet, dulcedo recurrat
Cordibus innocuis, et sit sibi pignus uterque
Velle pares, et nolle pares, stans una voluntas,
Par animi concors, paribus concurrere votis.
Ambo sibi requies cordis sint, ambo fideles,
Et quicunque datur casus, sit causa duorum.
Nec mora, jam venit alma quies, oculosque supinat
Somnus, et in dulcem solvuntur membra soporem.
Sed quum jure Deus, nullo prohibente valeret
Demere particulam, de quo plus ipse pararat,
Ne vi oblata daret juveni sua costa dolorem,
Redderet et tristem subitò, quem lædere nollet,
Fur opifex vult esse suus; nam posset et illam
Pulvere de simili princeps formare puellam.
Sed quo plenus amor toto de corde veniret,
Noscere in uxore voluit sua membra maritum,
Dividitur contexta cutis, subducitur una
Sensim costa viro, sed mox reditura marito.
Nam juvenis de parte brevi formatur adulta
Virgo, decora, rudis, matura tumentibus annis,
Conjugii, sobolisque capax, quibus apta probatur,
Et sine lacte pio crescit infantia pubes.
Excutitur somno juvenis, videt ipse puellam
Ante oculos astare suos, pater, inde maritus.
Non tamen ex costâ genitor, sed conjugis auctor.
Somnus erat partus, conceptus semine nullo,

ture to say, happier invention than in the prolix and inanimate strains of the Christian poet. For the awakened imagination was not content with feasting in silence on its lawful nutriment, the poetry of the Bible; it demanded and received perpetual stimulants, which increased, instead of satisfying, the appetite. That peculiar state of the human mind had now commenced, in which the imagination so far predominates over the other faculties, that truth cannot help arraying itself in the garb of fiction; credulity courts fiction, and fiction believes its own fables. That some of the Christian legends were deliberate forgeries can

CHAP. III.

Legends.

Materiem sopita quies produxit amoris,
Affectusque novos blandi genuêre sopores.
Constitit ante oculos nullo velamine tecta,
Corpore nuda simul niveo, quasi nympha profundi,
Cæsaries intonsa comis, gena pulchra rubore,
Omnia pulchra gerens, oculos, os, colla, manusque,
Vel qualem possent digiti formare Tonantis.
Nescia mens illis, fieri quæ causa fuisset;
Tunc Deus et princeps ambos, conjunxit in unum
Et remeat sua costa viro; sua membra recepit;
Accipit et fœnus, quum non sit debitor ullus.
His datur omnis humus, et quicquid jussa creavit,
Aëris et pelagi fœtus, elementa duorum,
Arbitrio commissa manent. His, crescite, dixit
Omnipotens, replete solum de semine vestro,
Sanguinis ingeniti natos nutrite nepotes,
Et de prole novos iterum copulate jugales.
Et dum terra fretum, dum cœlum sublevat aër,
Dum solis micat axe jubar, dum luna tenebras
Dissipat, et puro lucent mea sidera cœlo;
Sumere, quicquid habent pomaria nostra licebit;
Nam totum quod terra creat, quod pontus et aër
Protulit, addictum vestro sub jure manebit,
Deliciæque fluent vobis, et honesta voluptas;
Arboris unius tantum nescite saporem.

Dracontii Presbyt. Hispani 1791. Carmen de Deo, lib. i. v. Christ. secul. v. sub Theodos. M. 348.415. Carmina, à F. Arevalo. Romæ,

BOOK IV.

scarcely be questioned; the principle of pious fraud appeared to justify this mode of working on the popular mind; it was admitted and avowed. To deceive into Christianity was so valuable a service, as to hallow deceit itself. But the largest portion was probably the natural birth of that imaginative excitement which quickens its day-dreams and nightly visions into reality. The Christian lived in a supernatural world; the notion of the divine power, the perpetual interference of the Deity, the agency of the countless invisible beings which hovered over mankind, was so strongly impressed upon the belief, that every extraordinary, and almost every ordinary incident became a miracle, every inward emotion a suggestion either of a good or an evil spirit. A mythic period was thus gradually formed, in which reality melted into fable, and invention unconsciously trespassed on the province of history. This invention had very early let itself loose, in the spurious gospels, or accounts of the lives of the Saviour and his Apostles, which were chiefly, we conceive, composed among, or rather against, the sects which were less scrupulous in their veneration for the sacred books. Unless Antidocetic, it is difficult to imagine any serious object in fictions, in general so fantastic and puerile.* This example had been set by some, probably, of the foreign Jews, whose apocryphal books were as numerous and as wild as those of the Christian sectaries. The Jews had likewise anticipated them in the inter-

Spurious Gospels.

* Compare what has been said on the Gospel of the Infancy, vol. i. page 133.; though I would now observe that the antiquity of this gospel is very dubious.

polation or fabrication of the Sibylline verses. The fourth book of Esdras, the Shepherd of Hermas, and other prophetic works, grew out of the Prophets and the book of Revelations, as the Gospels of Nicodemus, and that of the Infancy, and the various spurious acts of the different Apostles*, out of the Gospels and Acts. The Recognitions and other tracts which are called the Clementina, partake more of the nature of religious romance. Many of the former were obviously intended to pass for genuine records, and must be proscribed as unwarrantable fictions; the latter may rather have been designed to trace, and so to awaken religious feelings, than as altogether real history. The Lives of St. Anthony by Athanasius and of Hilarion by Jerome are the prototypes of the countless biographies of saints; and with a strong outline of truth, became impersonations of the feelings, the opinions, the belief of the time. We have no reason to doubt that the

Lives of Saints.

* Compare the Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti, by J. A. Fabricius, and Jones on the Canon. A more elaborate collection of these curious documents has been commenced (I trust not abandoned) by Dr. Thilo, Lipsiæ, 1832. Of these, by far the most remarkable in its composition and its influence, was the Gospel of Nicodemus. The author of this work was a poet, and of no mean invention. The latter part, which describes the descent of the Saviour to hell, to deliver "the spirits in prison" (according to the hint in the epistle of St. Peter (1 Peter, iii. 19.), is extremely striking and dramatic. This "harrowing of hell," as it is called in the old mysteries, became a favourite topic of Christian legend, founded on, and tending greatly to establish the popular belief in, a purgatory, and to open, as it were, to the fears of man, the terrors of the penal state. With regard to these spurious gospels in general, it is a curious question in what manner, so little noticed as they are in the higher Christian literature, they should have reached down, and so completely incorporated themselves, in the dark ages, with the superstitions of the vulgar. They would never have furnished so many subjects to painting, if they had not been objects of popular belief.

BOOK IV.

authors implicitly believed whatever of fiction embellishes their own unpremeditated fables; the colouring, though fanciful and inconceivable to our eyes, was fresh and living to theirs.

History.

History itself could only reflect the proceedings of the Christian world, as they appeared to that world. We may lament that the annals of Christianity found in the earliest times no historian more judicious and trustworthy than Eusebius; the heretical sects no less prejudiced and more philosophical chronicler than Epiphanius: but in them, if not scrupulously veracious reporters of the events and characters of the times, we possess almost all that we could reasonably hope; faithful reporters of the opinions entertained, and the feelings excited by both. Few Christians of that day would not have considered it the sacred duty of a Christian to adopt that principle, avowed and gloried in by Eusebius, but now made a bitter reproach, that he would relate all that was to the credit, and pass lightly over all which was to the dishonour of the faith.* The historians of Christianity were credu-

* "In addition to these things (the appointment of rude and unfit persons to episcopal offices and other delinquencies), the ambition of many; the precipitate and illegitimate ordinations; the dissensions among the confessors; whatever the younger and more seditious so pertinaciously attempted against the remains of the Church, introducing innovation after innovation, and unsparingly, in the midst of the calamities of the persecution, adding new afflictions, and heaping evil upon evil; all these things I think it right to pass over, as unbefitting my history, which, as I stated in the beginning, declines and avoids the relation of such things. But whatsoever things, according to the sacred Scripture, are 'honest and of good report:' if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, these things I have thought it most befitting the history of these wonderful martyrs, to speak and to write and to address to the ears of the faithful." On this passage, de Martyr. Palæst. cxii., and that to which it alludes,

lous, but of that which it would have been considered impiety to disbelieve, even if they had the inclination.

The larger part of Christian literature consists in controversial writings, valuable to posterity as records of the progress of the human mind, and of the gradual developement of Christian opinions; at times worthy of admiration for the force, the copiousness, and the subtlety of argument; but too often repulsive from their solemn prolixity on insignificant subjects, and above all, the fierce, the unjust, and the acrimonious spirit with which they treat their adversaries. The Christian literature in prose (excluding the history and hagiography), may be distributed under five heads: — I. Apologies, or defences of the Faith, against Jewish, or more frequently Heathen adversaries. II. Hermeneutics, or commentaries on the sacred writings. III. Expositions of the principles and doctrines of the Faith. IV. Polemical works against the different sects and heresies. V. Orations.

E. H. viii. 2., the honesty and impartiality of Eusebius, which was not above suspicion in his own day (Tillemont, M. E. tom. i. part i. p. 67.), has been severely questioned. Gibbon's observations on the subject gave rise to many dissertations. Muller, de Fide Euseb. Cæs. Havniæ, 1813. Danzius, de Euseb. Cæs. H. E. Scriptore, ejusque Fide Historicâ rectè æstimandâ. Jenæ, 1815. Kestner, Comment. de Euseb. H. E. Conditoris Auctoritate et Fide. See also Reuterdahl, de Fontibus H. E. Eusebianæ. Lond. Goth. 1826, and various passages in the Excursus of Heinichen. In many passages it is clear that Eusebius did not adhere to his own rule of partiality. His Ecclesiastical History, though probably highly coloured in many parts, is by no means an uniform panegyric on the early Christians. Strict impartiality could not be expected from a Christian writer of that day; and probably Eusebius erred more often from credulity than from dishonesty. Yet the unbelief produced, in later times, by the fictitious character of early Christian History, may show how dangerous, how fatal, may be the least departure from truth.

BOOK IV.

Apologies.

I. We have already traced the manner in which the apology for Christianity, from humbly defensive, became vigorously aggressive. The calm appeal to justice and humanity, the earnest deprecation of the odious calumnies with which they were charged, the plea for toleration, gradually rise to the vehement and uncompromising proscription of the folly and guilt of idolatry. Tertullian marks, as it were, the period of transition, though his fiery temper may perhaps have anticipated the time when Christianity, in the consciousness of strength, instead of endeavouring to appease or avert the wrath of hostile Paganism, might defy it to deadly strife. The earliest extant apology, that of Justin Martyr, is by no means severe in argument, nor vigorous in style, and though not altogether abstaining from recrimination, is still rather humble and deprecatory in its tone. The short apologetic orations — as the Christians had to encounter not merely the general hostility of the government or the people, but direct and argumentative treatises, written against them by the philosophic party — gradually swelled into books. The first of these is perhaps the best, that of Origen against Celsus. The intellect of Origen, notwithstanding its occasional fantastic aberrations, appears to us more suited to grapple with this lofty argument than the diffuse and excursive Eusebius, whose evangelic Preparation and Demonstration heaped together vast masses of curious but by no means convincing learning, and the feebler and less candid Cyril, in his Books against Julian. We have already noticed

the great work which perhaps might be best arranged under this head, the "City of God" of St. Augustine; but there was one short treatise which may vindicate the Christian Latin literature from the charge of barbarism: perhaps no late work, either Pagan or Christian, reminds us of the golden days of Latin prose so much as the Octavius of Minucius Felix.

Hermeneutics.

II. The Hermeneutics, or the interpretation of the sacred writers, might be expected to have more real value and authority than can be awarded them by sober and dispassionate judgment. But it cannot be denied that almost all these writers, including those of highest name, are fanciful in their inferences, discover mysteries in the plainest sentences, wander away from the clear historical, moral, or religious meaning, into a long train of corollaries, at which we arrive we know not how. Piety, in fact, read in the Scripture, whatever it chose to read, and the devotional feeling it excited was at once the end and the test of the biblical commentary. But the character of the age and the school in which the Christian teachers were trained, must here, as in other cases, be taken into account. The most sober Jewish system of interpretation (setting aside the wild cabalistic notions of the significance of letters, the frequency of their recurrence, their collocation, and all those wild theories which were engendered by a servile veneration of the very form and language of the sacred writings) allowed itself at least an equal latitude of authoritative inference. The Platonists spun out the thoughts or axioms of

BOOK IV.

their master into as fine and subtle a web of mystic speculation. The general principle of an esoteric or recondite meaning in all works which commanded veneration, was universally received; it was this principle upon which the Gnostic sects formed all their vague and mystic theories; and if in this respect the Christian teachers did not bind themselves by much severer rules of reasoning than prevailed around them on all sides, they may have been actuated partly by some jealousy, lest their own plainer and simpler sacred writings should appear dry and barren, in comparison with the rich and imaginative freedom of their adversaries.

Expositions of Faith.

III. The expositions of faith and practice may comprehend all the smaller treatises on particular duties; prayer, almsgiving, marriage, and celibacy. They depend, of course, for their merit and authority on the character of the writer.

Polemical writings.

IV. Christianity might appear, if we judge by the proportion which the controversial writings bear to the rest of Christian literature, to have introduced an element of violent and implacable discord. Nor does the tone of these polemical writings, by which alone we can judge of the ancient heresies, of which their own accounts have almost entirely perished, impress us very favourably with their fairness or candour. But it must be remembered that, after all, the field of literature was not the arena in which the great contest between Christianity and the world was waged; it was in the private circle of each separate congregation, which was constantly but silently enlarging its bound-

aries; it was the immediate contact of mind with mind, the direct influence of the Christian clergy and even the more pious of the laity, which were tranquilly and noiselessly pursuing their course of conversion.*

These treatises, however, were principally addressed to the clergy, and through them worked downward into the mass of the Christian people: even with the more rapid and frequent communication which took place in the Christian world, they were but partially and imperfectly disseminated; but that which became another considerable and important part of their literature, their oratory, had in the first instance been directly addressed to the popular mind, and formed the chief part of the popular instruction. Christian preaching had opened a new field for eloquence.

Christian oratory.

V. Oratory, that oratory at least which communicates its own impulses and passions to the heart, which not merely persuades the reason, but sways the whole soul of man, had suffered a long and total silence. It had every where expired with the republican institutions. The discussions in the senate had been controlled by the imperial presence; and

* I might perhaps have made another and a very interesting branch of the prose Christian literature, the epistolary. The letters of the great writers form one of the most valuable parts of their works. The Latin Fathers, however, maintain that superiority over the Greek, which in classical times is asserted by Cicero and Pliny. The letters of Cyprian and Ambrose are of the highest interest as historical documents; those of Jerome, for manners; those of Augustine, perhaps for style. They far surpass those of Chrysostom, which we must, however, recollect were written from his dreary and monotonous place of exile. Yet Chrysostom's are superior to that dullest of all collections, the huge folio of the letters of Libanius.

BOOK IV.

even if the Roman senators had asserted the fullest freedom of speech, and allowed themselves the most exciting fervour of language, this was but one assembly in a single city, formed out of a confined aristocracy. The municipal assemblies were alike rebuked by the awe of a presiding master, the provincial governor, and of course afforded a less open field for stirring and general eloquence. The perfection of jurisprudence had probably been equally fatal to judicial oratory; we hear of great lawyers, but not of distinguished advocates. The highest flight of Pagan oratory which remains is in the adulatory panegyrics of the Emperors, pronounced by rival candidates for favour. Rhetoric was taught, indeed, and practised as a liberal, but it had sunk into a mere, art; it was taught by salaried professors in all the great towns to the higher youth; but they were mere exercises of fluent diction, on trite or obsolete subjects, the characters of the heroes of the Iliad, or some subtle question of morality.* It is impossible to conceive a more sudden and total change than from the school of the rhetorician to a crowded Christian church. The orator suddenly emerged from a listless audience of brother scholars, before whom he had discussed some one of those trivial questions according to formal rules, and whose ear could require no more than terseness or elegance of diction, and a just distribution of the argument: emotion was neither expected nor could be excited. He

* The declamations of Quintilian are no doubt favourable specimens both of the subjects and the style of these orators.

found himself among a breathless and anxious multitude, whose eternal destiny might seem to hang on his lips, catching up and treasuring his words as those of divine inspiration, and interrupting his more eloquent passages by almost involuntary acclamations.* The orator, in the best days of Athens, the tribune, in the most turbulent periods of Rome, had not such complete hold upon the minds of his hearers; and—but that the sublime nature of his subject usually lay above the sphere of immediate action, but that, the purer and loftier its tone, if it found instantaneous sympathy, yet it also met the constant inert resistance of prejudice, and ignorance, and vice to its authority,—the power with which this privilege of oratory would have invested the clergy would have been far greater than that of any of the former political or sacerdotal dominations. Wherever the oratory of the pulpit coincided with human passion, it was irresistible, and sometimes when it resolutely encountered it, it might extort an unwilling triumph: when it appealed to faction, to ferocity, to sectarian animosity, it swept away its audience like a torrent, to any violence or madness at which it aimed; when to virtue, to piety, to peace, it at times subdued the most refractory, and received the homage of devout obedience.

CHAP. III.

* These acclamations sometimes rewarded the more eloquent and successful teachers of rhetoric. Themistius speaks of the ἐκβοήσεις τε καὶ κρότους, οἷων θαμὰ ἀπολαύουσι παρ' ὑμῶν οἱ δαιμόνιοι σοφισταί. Basanistes, p. 236., edit. Deindorf. Compare the note. Chrysostom's works are full of allusions to these acclamations.

BOOK IV.

The bishop in general, at least when the hierarchical power became more dominant, reserved for himself an office so productive of influence and so liable to abuse.* But men like Athanasius or Augustine were not compelled to wait for that qualification of rank. They received the ready permission of the bishop to exercise at once this important function. In general, a promising orator would rarely want opportunity of distinction; and he who had obtained celebrity would frequently be raised by general acclamation, or by a just appreciation of his usefulness by the higher clergy, to an episcopal throne.

But it is difficult to conceive the general effect produced by this devotion of oratory to its new office. From this time, instead of seizing casual opportunities of working on the mind and heart of man, it was constantly, regularly, in every part of

* The laity were long permitted to address the people in the absence of the clergy. It was objected to the Bishop Demetrius, that he had permitted an unprecedented innovation in the case of Origen: he had allowed a layman to teach when *the bishop was present*. Euseb. E. H. vi. 19. Ὁ διδάσκων, εἰ καὶ λαϊκὸς ἦ, ἔμπειρος δὲ τοῦ λόγου, καὶ τὸν τρόπον σεμνός, διδασκέτω. Constit. Apost. viii. 32. Laicus, præsentibus clericis, nisi illis jubentibus, docere non audeat. Conc. Carth. can. 98. Jerome might be supposed, in his indignant remonstrance against the right which almost all assumed of interpreting the Scriptures, to be writing of later days. Quod medicorum est, promittunt medici, tractant fabrilia fabri. Sola Scripturorum ars est, quam sibi omnes passim vindicant. Scribimus, indocti doctique poëmata passim. *Hanc garrula anus*, hanc delirus senex, hanc sophista verbosus, hanc universi præsumunt, lacerant, *docent antequam discant*. Alii addicto supercilio, grandia verba trutinantes, inter mulierculas de sacris literis philosophantur. Alii discunt, proh pudor! à feminis, quod viros doceant: et ne parum hoc sit quadam facilitate verborum, imò audaciâ, edisserunt aliis quod ipsi non intelligunt. Epist. l. ad Paulinum, vol. iv. p. 571.

the empire, with more or less energy, with greater or less commanding authority, urging the doctrines of Christianity on awe-struck and submissive hearers. It had, of course, as it always has had, its periods of more than usual excitement, its sudden paroxysms of power, by which it convulsed some part of society. The constancy and regularity with which, in the ordinary course of things, it discharged its function, may in some degree have deadened its influence; and, in the period of ignorance and barbarism, the instruction was chiefly through the ceremonial, the symbolic worship, the painting, and even the dramatic representation.

Still, this new moral power, though intermitted at times, and even suspended, was almost continually operating, in its great and sustained energy, throughout the Christian world; though of course strongly tempered with the dominant spirit of Christianity, and, excepting in those periods either ripe for or preparing some great change in religious sentiment or opinion, the living and general expression of the prevalent Christianity, it was always in greater or less activity, instilling the broader principles of Christian faith and morals; if superstitious, rarely altogether silent; if appealing to passions which ought to have been rebuked before its voice, and exciting those feelings of hostility between conflicting sects which it should have allayed, — yet even then in some hearts its gentler and more Christian tones made a profound and salutary impression, while its more violent language fell off without

BOOK IV.

mingling with the uncongenial feelings. The great principles of the religion,—the providence of God, the redemption by Christ, the immortality of the soul, future retribution,—gleamed through all the fantastic and legendary lore with which it was encumbered and obscured in the darker ages. Christianity first imposed it as a duty on one class of men to be constantly enforcing moral and religious truth on all mankind. Though that duty, of course, was discharged with very different energy, judgment, and success, at different periods, it was always a strong counteracting power, an authorised, and in general respected, remonstrance against the vices and misery of mankind. Man was perpetually reminded that he was an immortal being under the protection of a wise and all-ruling Providence, and destined for a higher state of existence.

Nor was this influence only immediate and temporary: Christian oratory did not cease to speak when its echoes had died away upon the ear, and its expressions faded from the hearts of those to whom it was addressed. The orations of the Basils and Chrysostoms, the Ambroses and Augustines, became one of the most important parts of Christian literature. That eloquence which, in Rome and Greece, had been confined to civil and judicial affairs, was now inseparably connected with religion. The oratory of the pulpit took its place with that of the bar, the comitia, or the senate, as the historical record of that which once had power-

fully moved the minds of multitudes. No part of Christian literature so vividly reflects the times, the tone of religious doctrine or sentiment, in many cases the manners, habits, and character of the period, as the sermons of the leading teachers.

CHAP. IV.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE FINE ARTS.

Fine arts. As in literature, so in the fine arts, Christianity had to await that period in which it should become completely interwoven with the feelings and moral being of mankind, before it could put forth all its creative energies, and kindle into active productiveness those new principles of the noble and the beautiful, which it infused into the human imagination. The dawn of a new civilisation must be the first epoch for the development of Christian art. The total disorganisation of society, which was about to take place, implied the total suspension of the arts which embellish social life. The objects of admiration were swept away by the destructive ravages of Barbarian warfare ; or, where they were left in contemptuous indifference, the mind had neither leisure to indulge, nor refinement enough to feel, this admiration, which belongs to a more secure state of society, and of repose from the more pressing toils and anxieties of life.

This suspended animation of the fine arts was of course different in degree in the various parts of Europe, in proportion as they were exposed to the ravages of war, the comparative barbarism of the tribes by which they were overrun, the station held by the clergy, the security which they could command

by the sanctity of their character, and their disposable wealth. At every period, from Theodoric, who dwelt with vain fondness over the last struggles of decaying art, to Charlemagne, who seemed to hail, with prophetic taste, the hope of its revival, there is no period in which the tradition of art was not preserved in some part of Europe, though obscured by ignorance, barbarism, and that still worse enemy, if possible, false and meretricious taste. Christianity, in every branch of the arts, preserved something from the general wreck, and brooded in silence over the imperfect rudiments of each, of which it was the sole conservator. The mere mechanical skill of working stone, of delineating the human face, and of laying on colours so as to produce something like illusion, was constantly exercised in the works which religion required to awaken the torpid emotions of an ignorant and superstitious people.*

In all the arts, Christianity was at first, of course, purely imitative, and imitative of the prevalent degenerate style. It had not yet felt its strength, and dared not develope, or dreamed not of those latent principles which lay beneath its religion, and which hereafter were to produce works, in its own style, and its own department, rivalling all the wonders of antiquity; when the extraordinary creations of its proper architecture were to arise, far surpassing in the skill of their construction, in their magnitude more than equalling them, and in

* The Iconoclasts had probably more influence in barbarising the East than the Barbarians themselves in the West.

BOOK IV.

their opposite indeed, but not less majestic style, vindicating the genius of Christianity: when Italy was to transcend ancient Greece in painting as much as the whole modern world is inferior in the rival art of sculpture.

Architecture.

I. Architecture was the first of these arts which was summoned to the service of Christianity. The devotion of the earlier ages did not need, and could not command, this subsidiary to pious emotion, — it imparted sanctity to the meanest building; now it would not be content without enshrining its triumphant worship in a loftier edifice. Religion at once offered this proof of its sincerity by the sacrifice of wealth to this hallowed purpose; and the increasing splendour of the religious edifices reacted upon the general devotion, by the feelings of awe and veneration which they inspired. Splendour, however, did not disdain to be subservient to use; and the arrangements of the new buildings, which arose in all quarters, or were diverted to this new object, accommodated themselves to the Christian ceremonial. In the East, we have already shown, in the church of Tyre, described by Eusebius, the ancient temple lending its model to the Christian church; and the basilica, in the West, adapted with still greater ease and propriety for Christian worship.* There were many distinctive points which materially affected the style of Christian architecture. The simplicity of the Grecian temple, as it has been shown †, harmonised perfectly only with its own form of wor-

* Vol. II. p. 298. 300. † Vol. II. p. 411. 415.

ship; it was more of a public place, sometimes, indeed, hypæthral, or open to the air. The Christian worship demanded more complete enclosure; the church was more of a chamber, in which the voice of an individual could be distinctly heard; and the whole assembly of worshippers, sheltered from the change or inclemency of the weather, or the intrusion of unauthorised persons, might listen in undisturbed devotion to the prayer, the reading of the scripture, or the preacher.

Windows.

One consequence of this was the necessity of regular apertures for the admission of light*; and these imperatively demanded a departure from the plan of temple architecture.

Windows had been equally necessary in the basilicæ for the public legal proceedings; the reading legal documents required a bright and full light; and in the basilicæ the windows were numerous and large. The nave, probably from the earliest period, was lighted by cleristory windows, which were above the roof of the lower aisles.†

* In the fanciful comparison (in H. E. x. 4.) which Eusebius draws between the different parts of the church and the different gradations of catechumens, he speaks of the most perfect as "shone on by the light through the windows:" — *τοὺς δὲ πρὸς τὸ φῶς ἀνοίγμασι καταυγάζει.* He seems to describe the temple as full of light, emblematical of the heavenly light diffused by Christ, — *λαμπρὸν καὶ φωτὸς ἔμπλεω τὰ τε ἔνδοθεν καὶ τὰ ἐκτος*: but it is not easy to discover where his metaphor ends and his fact begins. See Ciampini, vol. i. p. 74.

† The size of the windows has been disputed by Christian antiquaries: some asserted that the early Christians, accustomed to the obscurity of their crypts and catacombs, preferred narrow apertures for light; others that the services, especially reading the Scriptures, required it to be both bright and equally diffused. Ciampini, as an Italian, prefers the latter, and sarcastically alludes to the narrow windows of Gothic architecture, introduced by the "Vandals," whose first object being to exclude the cold of their northern climate, they contracted the windows to the

BOOK IV.

Throughout the West, the practice of converting the basilica into the church continued to a late period; the very name seemed appropriate: the royal hall was changed into a dwelling for the GREAT KING.*

Subdivisions of the building.

The more minute subdivision of the internal arrangement contributed to form the peculiar character of Christian architecture. The different orders of Christians were distributed according to their respective degrees of proficiency. But besides this, the church had inherited from the synagogue, and from the general feeling of the East, the principle of secluding the female part of the worshippers. Enclosed galleries, on a higher level, were probably common in the synagogues; and this arrangement appears to have been generally adopted in the earlier Christian churches.†

This greater internal complexity necessarily led to still farther departure from the simplicity of design in the exterior plan and elevation. The single or the double row of columns, reaching from the top to the bottom of the building, with the long and unbroken horizontal line of the roof reposing upon

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narrowest dimensions possible. In the monastic churches, the light was excluded, quia monachis meditantibus fortasse officiebat, quominùs possent intento animo soli Deo vacare. Ciampini, Vetera Monumenta. The author considers that the parochial or cathedral churches may, in general, be distinguished from the monastic by this test.

* Basilicæ priùs vocabantur regum habitacula, nunc autem ideo basilicæ divina templa nominantur, quia ibi Regi omnium Deo cultus et sacrificia offeruntur. Isidor. Orig. lib. v. Basilicæ olim negotiis pæne, nunc votis pro tuâ salute susceptis. Auson. Grat. Act. pro Consul.

† Populi confluunt ad ecclesias castâ celebritate, honestâ utriusque sexûs discretione. August. de Civ. Dei, ii. 28. Compare Bingham, viii. 5. 5.

it, would give place to rows of unequal heights, or to the division into separate stories.

The same process had probably taken place in the palatial architecture of Rome. Instead of one order of columns, which reached from the top to the bottom of the buildings, rows of columns, one above the other, marked the different stories into which the building was divided.

Christianity thus, from the first, either at once assumed, or betrayed its tendency to, its peculiar character. Its harmony was not that of the Greek, arising from the breadth and simplicity of one design, which, if at times too vast for the eye to contemplate at a single glance, was comprehended and felt at once by the mind; of which the lines were all horizontal and regular, and the general impression a majestic or graceful uniformity, either awful from its massiveness or solidity, or pleasing from its lightness and delicate proportion.

The harmony of the Christian building (if in fact it attained, before its perfection in the mediæval Gothic, to that first principle of architecture) consisted in the combination of many separate parts, duly balanced into one whole; the subordination of the accessories to the principal object; the multiplication of distinct objects coalescing into one rich and effective mass, and pervaded and reduced to a kind of symmetry by one general character in the various lines and in the style of ornament.

This predominance of complexity over simplicity, of variety over symmetry, was no doubt greatly increased by the buildings which, from an

BOOK IV.

early period, arose around the central church, especially in all the monastic institutions. The baptistry was often a separate building, and frequently, in the ordinary structures for worship, dwellings for the officiating priesthood were attached to, or adjacent to, the church. The Grecian temple appears often to have stood alone, on the brow of a hill, in a grove, or in some other commanding or secluded situation; in Rome, many of the pontifical offices were held by patricians, who occupied their own palaces; but the Eastern temples were in general surrounded by spacious courts, and with buildings for the residence of the sacerdotal colleges. If these were not the models of the Christian establishments, the same ecclesiastical arrangements, the institution of a numerous and wealthy priestly order, attached to the churches, demanded the same accommodation. Thus a multitude of subordinate buildings would crowd around the central or more eminent house of God; at first, where mere convenience was considered, and where the mind had not awakened to the solemn impressions excited by vast and various architectural works, combined by a congenial style of building, and harmonised by skilful arrangement and subordination, they would be piled together irregularly and capriciously, obscuring that which was really grand, and displaying irreverent confusion rather than stately order. Gradually, as the sense of grandeur and solemnity dawned upon the mind, there would arise the desire of producing one general effect and impression; but this no doubt was the later deve-

lopment of a principle which, if at first dimly perceived, was by no means rigidly or consistently followed out. We must wait many centuries before we reach the culminating period of genuine Christian architecture.

Sculpture.

II. Sculpture alone, of the fine arts, has been faithful to its parent Paganism. It has never cordially imbibed the spirit of Christianity. The second creative epoch (how poor, comparatively, in fertility and originality!) was contemporary and closely connected with the revival of classical literature in Europe. It has lent itself to Christian sentiment chiefly in two forms; as necessary and subordinate to architecture, and as monumental sculpture.

Christianity was by no means so intolerant, at least after its first period, of the remains of ancient sculpture, or so perseveringly hostile to the art, as might have been expected from its severe aversion to idolatry. The earlier fathers, indeed, condemn the arts of sculpture and of painting as inseparably connected with Paganism. Every art which frames an image is irreclaimably idolatrous * ; and the stern Tertullian reproaches Hermogenes with the two deadly sins of painting and marrying.† The

* Ubi artifices statuarum et imaginum et omnis generis simulachrorum diabolus sæculo intulit — caput facta est idolatriæ ars omnis quæ idolum quoque modo edit. Tertull. de Idolat. c. iii. He has no language to express his horror that makers of images should be admitted into the clerical order.

† Pingit illicitè, nubit assiduè, legem Dei in libidinem defendit, in artem contemnit; bis falsarius et cauterio et stylo. In Hermog. cap i. Cauterio refers to encaustic painting. The Apostolic Constitutions reckon a maker of idols with persons of infamous character and profession. viii. 32.

BOOK IV.

Council of Elvira proscribed paintings on the walls of churches*, which nevertheless became a common usage during the two next centuries.

In all respects, this severer sentiment was mitigated by time. The civil uses of sculpture were generally recognised. The Christian emperors erected, or permitted the adulation of their subjects to erect, their statues in the different cities. That of Constantine on the great porphyry column, with its singular and unchristian confusion of attributes, has been already noticed. Philostorgius indeed asserts that this statue became an object of worship even to the Christians; that lights and frankincense were offered before it, and that the image was worshipped as that of a tutelary god.† The sedition in Antioch arose out of insults to the statues of the emperors‡, and the erection of the statue of the empress before the great church in Constantinople gave rise to the last disturbance, which ended in the exile of Chrysostom.§ The statue of the emperor was long the representative of the imperial presence; it was reverenced in the capital and in the provincial cities with honours approaching to adoration.‖ The

* Placuit picturas in ecclesiâ esse non debere, ne quod colitur et adoratur, in parietibus depingatur. Can. xxxvi.

† Vol. ii. p. 408. Philostorg. ii. 17.

‡ Vol. iii. p. 209.

§ Vol. iii. p. 234.

‖ Εἰ γὰρ βασιλέως ἀπόντος εἰκὼν ἀναπληροῖ χώραν βασιλέως, καὶ προσκυνοῦσιν ἄρχοντες καὶ ἱερομηνίαι ἐπιτελοῦνται, καὶ ἄρχοντες ὑπαντῶσι, καὶ δῆμοι προσκυνοῦσιν οὐ πρὸς τὴν σανίδα βλέποντες ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸν χαρακτῆρα τοῦ βασιλέως, οὐκ ἐν τῇ φύσει θεωρουμένου ἀλλ' ἐν γραφῇ παραδεικνυμένου. Joann. Damascen. de Imagin. orat. 9. Jerome, however (on Daniel), compares it to the worship demanded by Nebuchadnezzar. Ergo judices et principes sæculi, qui imperatorum sta-

modest law of Theodosius, by which he attempted to regulate these ceremonies, of which the adulation bordered at times on impiety, expressly reserved the excessive honours, sometimes lavished on these statues at the public games, for the supreme Deity.*

The statues even of the gods were condemned with some reluctance and remorse. No doubt iconoclasm, under the first edicts of the emperors, raged in the provinces with relentless violence. Yet Constantine, we have seen, did not scruple to adorn his capital with images, both of gods and men, plundered indiscriminately from the temples of Greece. The Christians, indeed, asserted that they were set up for scorn and contempt.

Even Theodosius exempts such statues as were admirable as works of art from the common sentence of destruction.† This doubtful toleration of profane art gradually gave place to the admission of Art into the service of Christianity.

Sculpture, and, still more, Painting, were received as the ministers of Christian piety, and allowed to lay their offerings at the feet of the new religion.

But the commencement of Christian art was slow, timid, and rude. It long preferred allegory

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tuas adorant et imagines, hoc se facere intelligent quod tres pueri facere nolentes placuêre Deo.

* They were to prove their loyalty by the respect which they felt for the statue in their secret hearts: — excedens cultura hominum dignitatum superno numini reservetur. Cod. Theod. xv. 4. 1.

† A particular temple was to remain open, in quâ simulachra feruntur posita, artis pretio quam divinitate metienda. Cod. Theod. xvi. 10. 8.

BOOK IV.

to representation, the true and legitimate object of art.* It expanded but tardily during the first centuries, from the significant symbol to the human form in colour or in marble.

The Cross was long the primal, and even the sole, symbol of Christianity — the cross in its rudest and its most artless form; for many centuries elapsed before the image of the Saviour was wrought upon it.† It was the copy of the common instrument of ignominious execution in all its nakedness; and nothing, indeed, so powerfully attests the triumph of Christianity as the elevation of this, which to the Jew and to the Heathen was the basest, the most degrading, punishment of the lowest criminal †, the proverbial terror of the

* Rumohr. Italienische Forschungen, i. p. 158. We want the German words *andeutung* (allusion or suggestion, but neither conveys the same forcible sense), and *darstellung*, actual representation or placing before the sight. The artists who employ the first can only address minds already furnished with the key to the symbolic or allegoric form. Imitation (the genuine object of art) speaks t all mankind.

† The author has expressed in a former work his impression on this most remarkable fact in the history of Christianity.

"In one respect it is impossible now to conceive the extent to which the Apostles of the *crucified* Jesus shocked all the feelings of mankind. The public establishment of Christianity, the adoration of ages, the reverence of nations, has thrown around the Cross of Christ an indelible and inalienable sanctity. No effort of the imagination can dissipate the illusion of dignity which has gathered round it; it has been so long dissevered from all its coarse and humiliating associations, that it cannot be cast back and desecrated into its state of opprobrium and contempt. To the most daring unbeliever among ourselves it is the symbol — the absurd and irrational, he may conceive, but still the ancient and venerable symbol — of a powerful and influential religion. What was it to the Jew and the Heathen? — the basest, the most degrading, punishment of the lowest criminal, the proverbial terror of the wretched slave! It was to them what the most despicable and revolting instrument of public execution is to us. Yet to the Cross of Christ men turned from deities, in which were embodied every attribute of strength, power, and dignity," &c. Milman's Bampton Lectures, p. 279.

wretched slave, into an object for the adoration of ages, the reverence of nations. The glowing language of Chrysostom expresses the universal sanctity of the Cross in the fourth century. "Nothing so highly adorns the imperial crown as the Cross, which is more precious than the whole world: its form, at which, of old, men shuddered with horror, is now so eagerly and emulously sought for, that it is found among princes and subjects, men and women, virgins and matrons, slaves and freemen; for all bear it about, perpetually impressed on the most honourable part of the body, or on the forehead, as on a pillar. This appears in the sacred temple, in the ordination of priests; it shines again on the body of the Lord, and in the mystic supper. It is to be seen every where in honour, in the private house and the public market-place, in the desert, in the highway, on mountains, in forests, on hills, on the sea, in ships, on islands, on our beds and on our clothes, on our arms, in our chambers, in our banquets, on gold and silver vessels, on gems, in the paintings of our walls, on the bodies of diseased beasts, on human bodies possessed by devils, in war and peace, by day, by night, in the dances of the feasting, and the meetings of the fasting and praying." In the time of Chrysostom the legend of the Discovery of the True Cross was generally received. "Why do all men vie with each other to approach that true Cross, on which the sacred body was crucified? Why do many, women as well as men, bear fragments of it set in gold as ornaments round their necks, though it was the sign

BOOK IV.

Symbolism.

of condemnation. Even emperors have laid aside the diadem to take up the Cross."*

A more various symbolism gradually grew up, and extended to what approached nearer to works of art. Its rude designs were executed in engravings on seals, or on lamps, or glass vessels, and before long in relief on marble, or in paintings on the walls of the cemeteries. The earliest of these were the seal rings, of which many now exist, with Gnostic symbols and inscriptions. These seals were considered indispensable in ancient housekeeping. The Christian was permitted, according to Clement of Alexandria, to bestow on his wife one ring of gold, in order that, being entrusted with the care of his domestic concerns, she might seal up that which might be insecure. But these rings must not have any idolatrous engraving, only such as might suggest Christian or gentle thoughts, the dove, the fish †, the ship, the anchor, or the Apostolic fisherman fishing for men, which would remind them of children drawn out of the waters of baptism. ‡ Tertullian mentions a communion cup with the image of the Good Shepherd embossed

* Chrysost. Oper. vol. i. p. 57. 569. See in Munter's work (p. 68. et seq.) the various forms which the Cross assumed, and the fanciful notions concerning it.

Ipsa species crucis quid est nisi forma quadrata mundi? Oriens de vertice fulgens; Arcton dextra tenet; Auster in lævâ consistit; Occidens sub plantis formatur. Unde Apostolus dicit: ut sciamus, quæ sit altitudo, et latitudo, et longitudo, et profundum. Aves quando volant ad æthera, formam crucis assumunt; homo natans per aquas, vel orans, formâ crucis vehitur. Navis per maria antennâ cruci similatâ sufflatur. Thau litera signum salutis et crucis describitur. Hieronym. in Marc. xv.

† The ΙΧΘΥΣ, according to the rule of the ancient anagram, meant Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ.

‡ Clem. Alex. Pædagog. iii. 2.

upon it. But Christian symbolism soon disdained these narrow limits, extended itself into the whole domain of the Old Testament as well as of the Gospel, and even ventured at times over the unhallowed borders of Paganism. The persons and incidents of the Old Testament had all a typical or allegorical reference to the doctrines of Christianity.* Adam asleep, while Eve was taken from his side, represented the death of Christ; Eve, the mother of all who are born to new life; Adam and Eve with the serpent had a latent allusion to the new Adam and the Cross. Cain and Abel, Noah and the ark with the dove and the olive branch, the sacrifice of Isaac, Joseph sold by his brethren as a bondslave, Moses by the burning bush, breaking the tables of the law, striking water from the rock, with Pharaoh perishing in the Red Sea, the ark of God, Samson bearing the gates of Gaza, Job on the dung-heap, David and Goliah, Elijah in the car of fire, Tobias with the fish, Daniel in the lions' den, Jonah issuing from the whale's belly or under the gourd, the three children in the fiery furnace, Ezekiel by the valley of dead bones, were favourite subjects, and had all their mystic significance. They reminded the devout worshipper of the Sacrifice, Resurrection, and Redemption of Christ. The direct illustrations of the New Testament showed the Lord of the Church on a high mountain, with four rivers, the Gospels, flowing from it; the Good Shepherd bearing the

* See Mamachi, De Costumi di' primitivi Christiani, lib. i. c. iv.

BOOK IV.

lamb *, and sometimes the Apostles and Saints of a later time appeared in the symbols. Paganism lent some of her spoils to the conqueror.† The Saviour was represented under the person and with the lyre of Orpheus, either as the civiliser of men, or in allusion to the Orphic poetry, which had already been interpolated with Christian images. Hence also the lyre was the emblem of truth. Other images, particularly those of animals, were not uncommon.‡ The Church was represented by a ship, the anchor denoted the pure ground of faith; the stag implied the hart which thirsted after the

* There is a Heathen prototype (see R. Rochette) even for this good shepherd, and one of the earliest images is encircled with the "Four Seasons" represented by Genii with Pagan attributes. Compare Munter, p. 61. Tombstones, and even inscriptions, were freely borrowed. One Christian tomb has been published by P. Lupi, inscribed "Diis Manibus."

† In three very curious dissertations in the last volume of the Memoirs of the Academy of Inscriptions on works of art in the catacombs of Rome, M. Raoul Rochette has shown how much, either through the employment of Heathen artists, or their yet imperfectly unheathenised Christianity, the Christians borrowed from the monumental decorations, the symbolic figures, and even the inscriptions, of Heathenism. M. Rochette says, "La physionomie presque payenne qu' offre la décoration des catacombes de Rome," p. 96. The Protestant travellers, Burnet and Misson, from the singular mixture of the sacred and the profane in these monuments, inferred that these catacombs were common places of burial for Heathens and Christians. The Roman antiquarians, however, have clearly proved the contrary. M. Raoul Rochette, as well as M. Rostelli (in an Essay in the Roms Beschreibung), consider this point conclusively made out in favour of the Roman writers. M. R. Rochette has adduced monuments in which the symbolic images and the language of Heathenism and Christianity are strangely mingled together. Munter had observed the Jordan represented as a river god.

‡ The catacombs at Rome are the chief authorities for this symbolic school of Christian art. They are represented in the works of Bosio, Roma Sotteranea, Aringhi, Bottari, and Boldetti. But perhaps the best view of them, being in fact a very judicious and well-arranged selection of the most curious works of early Christian art, may be found in the Sinnbilder und Kunstvorstellungen der alten Christen, by Bishop Munter.

water-brooks; the horse the rapidity with which men ought to run and embrace the doctrine of salvation; the hare the timid Christian hunted by persecutors; the lion prefigured strength, or appeared as the emblem of the tribe of Judah; the fish was an anagram of the Saviour's name; the dove indicated the simplicity, the cock the vigilance, of the Christian; the peacock and the phœnix the Resurrection.

But these were simple and artless memorials to which devotion gave all their value and significance; in themselves they neither had, nor aimed at, grandeur or beauty. They touched the soul by the reminiscences which they awakened, or the thoughts which they suggested; they had nothing of that inherent power over the emotions of the soul which belongs to the higher works of art.*

Art must draw nearer to human nature and to the truth of life, before it can accomplish its object. The elements of this feeling, even the first sense of external grandeur and beauty, had yet to be infused

* All these works in their different forms are in general of coarse and inferior execution. The funereal vases found in the Christian cemeteries are of the lowest style of workmanship. The senator Buonarotti, in his work, "De' Vetri Cemeteriali," thus accounts for this:—"Stettero sempre lontane di quelle arti, colle quali avessero potuto correr pericolo di contaminarsi colla idolatria, e da ciò avvenne, che pochi, o niuno di essi si diede alla pittura e alla scultura, le quali aveano per oggetto principale di rappresentare le deità, e le favole de' gentili. Sicche volendo i fedeli adornar con simboli devoti i loro vasi, erano forzati per lo più a valersi di artefici inesperti, e che professavano altri mestieri." See Mamachi, vol. i. p. 275. Compare Rumohr, who suggests other reasons for the rudeness of the earliest Christian relief, in my opinion, though by no means irreconcilable with this, neither so simple nor satisfactory. Page 170.

BOOK IV.

into the Christian mind. The pure and holy and majestic inward thoughts and sentiments had to work into form, and associate themselves with appropriate visible images. This want and this desire were long unfelt.

Person of the Saviour.

The person of the Saviour was a subject of grave dispute among the older fathers. Some took the expressions of the sacred writings in a literal sense, and insisted that his outward form was mean and unseemly. Justin Martyr speaks of his want of form and comeliness.* Tertullian, who could not but be in extremes, expresses the same sentiment with his accustomed vehemence. The person of Christ wanted not merely divine majesty, but even human beauty.† Clement of Alexandria maintains the same opinion.‡ But the most curious illustration of this notion occurs in the work of Origen against Celsus. In the true spirit of Grecian art and philosophy, Celsus denies that the Deity could dwell in a mean form or low stature. Origen is embarrassed with the argument; he fears to recede from the literal interpretation of Isaiah, but endeavours to soften it off, and denies that it refers to lowliness of stature, or means more than the absence of noble form or pre-eminent beauty. He then triumphantly adduces the verse of the forty-fourth

* Τὸν ἀειδῆ καὶ ἄτιμον φάνεντα. Dial. cum Triph. 85. and 88. 100.

† Quodcumque illud corpusculum sit, quoniam habitum, et quoniam conspectum sit, si inglorius, si ignobilis si inhonorabilis; meus erit Christus *** — Sed species ejus inhonorata, deficiens ultra omnes homines. Contr. Marc. iii.17. Ne aspectu quidam honestus. Adv. Judæos, c. 14. Etiam despicientium formam ejus hæc erat vox. Adeo nec humanæ honestatis corpus fuit, nedum cœlestis claritatis. De Carn. Christi. c. 9.

‡ Pædagog. iii. 1.

Psalm, "Ride on in thy loveliness and in thy beauty."* CHAP. IV.

But as the poetry of Christianity obtained more full possession of the human mind, these debasing and inglorious conceptions were repudiated by the more vivid imagination of the great writers in the fourth century. The great principle of Christian art began to awaken; the outworking as it were, of the inward purity, beauty, and harmony, upon the symmetry of the external form, and the lovely expression of the countenance. Jerom, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, with one voice, assert the majesty and engaging appearance of the Saviour. The language of Jerom first shows the sublime conception which was brooding, as it were, in the Christian mind, and was at length slowly to develope itself up to the gradual perfection of Christian art. "Assuredly that splendour and majesty of the hidden divinity, which shone even in his human countenance, could not but attract at first sight all beholders." "Unless he had something celestial in his countenance and in his look, the Apostles would not immediately have followed him."† "The Heavenly Father forced upon him in full streams that

* Ἀμηχανὸν γὰρ ὅτῳ θεῖον τι πλέον τῶν ἄλλων προσῆν, μηδὲν ἀλλοῦ διαφέρειν· τοῦτο δὲ οὐδὲν ἄλλου διεφέρεν, ἀλλ', ὡς φασὶ, μικρὸν, καὶ δυσειδὲς, καὶ ἀγενὲς ἦν. Celsus, apud Origen, vi. 75. Origen quotes the text of the LXX, in which it is the forty-fourth, and thus translated: Τῇ ὡραιότητί σου, καὶ τῷ κάλλει σου καὶ ἔντεινον, καὶ κατευοδοῦ, καὶ βασίλευε.

† Certe fulgor ipsa et majestas divinitatis occultæ, quæ etiam in humanâ facie relucebat, ex primo ad se venientes trahere poterat aspectu. Hieronym. in Matth. c. ix. 9.

Nisi enim habuisset et in vultu quiddam et in oculis sidereum, nunquam eum statim secuti fuissent Apostoli. Epist ad Princip. Virginem.

BOOK IV.

corporeal grace, which is distilled drop by drop upon mortal man." Such are the glowing expressions of Chrysostom.* Gregory of Nyssa applies all the vivid imagery of the Song of Solomon to the person as well as to the doctrine of Christ; and Augustine declares that "He was beautiful on his mother's bosom, beautiful in the arms of his parents, beautiful upon the Cross, beautiful in the sepulchre."

There were some, however, who even at this, and to a much later period, chiefly among those addicted to monkish austerity, who adhered to the older opinion, as though human beauty were something carnal and material. St. Basil interprets even the forty-fourth Psalm in the more austere sense. Many of the painters among the Greeks, even in the eighth century, who were monks of the rule of St. Basil, are said to have been too faithful to the judgment of their master, or perhaps their rude art was better qualified to represent a mean figure, with harsh outline and stiff attitude, and a blackened countenance, rather than majesty of form or beautiful expression. Such are the Byzantine pictures of this school. The harsh Cyril of Alexandria repeats the assertion of the Saviour's mean appearance, even beyond the ordinary race of men, in the strongest language.† This controversy proves decisively that there was no traditionary type, which was admitted to represent the

* In Psalm, xliv.

† Ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον, ἐκλείπον παρὰ πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. De Nud. Noe. lib. ii. t. i. p. 43.

human form of the Saviour. The distinct assertion of Augustine, that the form and countenance of Christ were entirely unknown, and painted with every possible variety of expression, is conclusive as to the West. * In the East we may dismiss at once as a manifest fable, probably of local superstition, the statue of Christ at Cæsarea Philippi, representing him in the act of healing the woman with the issue of blood. † But there can be no doubt that paintings, purporting to be actual resemblances of Jesus, of Peter, and of Paul, were current in the time of Eusebius in the East ‡, though we are disinclined to receive the authority of a later writer, that Constantine adorned his new city with likenesses of Christ and his Apostles.

Earliest images Gnostic.

The earliest images emanated, no doubt, from the Gnostic sects, who not merely blended the Christian and Pagan, or Oriental notions on their

* Qua fuerit ille facie nos penitus ignoramus: nam et ipsius Dominicæ facies carnis innumerabilium cogitationum diversitate variatur et fingitur, quæ tamen una erat, quæcunque erat. De Trin. lib. vii. c. 4, 5.

The Christian apologists uniformly acknowledge the charge, that they have no altars or *images*. Minuc. Fel. Octavius, x. p. 61. Arnob. vi. post init. Origen, contrà Celsum, viii. p. 389. Compare Jablonski (Dissertatio de Origine Imaginum Christi, opuscul. vol. iii. p. 377.) who well argues that, consistently with Jewish manners, there could not have been any likeness of the Lord. Compare Pearson on the Creed, vol. ii. p. 101.

† Euseb. H. E. vii. 18. with the Excursus of Heinichen. These were, probably, two bronze figures, one of a kneeling woman in the act of supplication; the other, the upright figure of a man, probably of a Cæsar, which the Christian inhabitants of Cæsarea Philippi transformed into the Saviour and the woman in the Gospels: *Τοῦτον δὲ τὸν ἀνδριάντα εἰκονα τοῦ Ιησοῦ φέρειν ἔλεγον.* Eusebius seems desirous of believing the story. Compare Munter.

‡ *Ὅτε καὶ τῶν Ἀποστόλων τῶν αὐτοῦ τὰς εἰκόνας* Παυλου *καὶ* Πέτρου *καὶ αὐτοῦ δὴ τοῦ* Χριστοῦ *διὰ χρωμάτων ἐν γραφαῖς σωζομένας ἱστορήσαμεν.* Ibid. loc. cit.

BOOK IV.

gems and seals, engraved with the mysterious Abraxas; but likewise, according to their eclectic system, consecrated small golden or silver images of all those ancient sages whose doctrines they had adopted, or had fused together in their wild and various theories. The image of Christ appeared with those of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and probably some of the eastern philosophers.* The Carpocratians had painted portraits of Christ; and Marcellina †, a celebrated female heresiarch, exposed to the view of the Gnostic church in Rome, the portraits of Jesus and St. Paul, of Homer, and of Pythagoras. Of this nature, no doubt, were the images of Abraham, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Apollonius, and Christ, set up in his private chapel by the Emperor Alexander Severus. These small images‡, which varied very much, it should seem,

* Irenæus de Hær. i. c. 84. (edit. Grabe). Epiphan. Hæres. xxvii. 6. Augustin. de Hæresib. c. vii. These images of Christ were said to have been derived from the collection of Pontius Pilate. Compare Jablonski's Dissertation.

† Marcellina lived about the middle of the second century, or a little later.

‡ Of these Gnostic images of Christ there are only two extant which seem to have some claim to authenticity and antiquity. Those from the collection of Chifflet are now considered to represent Serapis. One is mentioned by M. Raoul Rochette (Types Imitatifs de l'Art du Christianisme, p. 21.)'; it is a stone, a kind of tessera with a head of Christ, young and beardless, in profile, with the word ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ in Greek characters, with the symbolic fish below. This is in the collection of M. Fortia d'Urban, and is engraved as a vignette to M. R. Rochette's essay. The other is adduced in an "Essay on Ancient Coins, Medals, and Gems, as illustrating the Progress of Christianity in the Early Ages, by the Rev. R. Walsh." This is a kind of medal or tessera of metal, representing Christ as he is described in the apocryphal letter of Lentulus to the Roman senate. (Fabric. Cod. Apoc. Nov. Test. p. 301, 302.) It has a head of Christ, the hair parted over the forehead, covering the ears, and falling over the shoulders; the shape is long, the beard short and thin. It has the name of Jesus in Hebrew, and has not the *nimbus*,

in form and feature, could contribute but little, if in the least, to form that type of superhuman beauty, which might mingle the sentiment of human sympathy with reverence for the divinity of Christ. Christian art long brooded over such feelings as those expressed by Jerome and Augustine, before it could even attempt to embody them in marble or colour.*

The earliest portraits of the Saviour.

The earliest pictures of the Saviour seem formed on one type or model. They all represent the oval countenance, slightly lengthened; the grave, soft, and melancholy expression; the short thin beard; the hair parted on the forehead into two long masses, which fall upon the shoulders.† Such are the features which characterise the earliest ex-

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or glory. On the reverse is an inscription in a kind of cabalistic character, of which the sense seems to be, "The Messiah reigns in peace; God is made man." This may possibly be a tessera of the Jewish Christians; or modelled after a Gnostic type of the first age of Christianity. See Discours sur les Types Imitatifs de l'Art du Christianisme, par M. Raoul Rochette.

* I must not omit the description of the person of our Saviour in the spurious Epistle of Lentulus to the Roman Senate (see Fabric. Cod. Apoc. N. T. i. p. 301.), since it is referred to constantly by writers on early Christian art. But what proof is there of the existence of this epistle previous to the great æra of Christian painting? "He was a man of tall and well-proportioned form; the countenance severe and impressive, so as to move the beholders at once to love and awe. His hair was of the colour of wine (vinei coloris), reaching to his ears, with no radiation (sine radiatione, without the nimbus), and standing up, from his ears, clustering and bright, and flowing down over his shoulders, parted on the top according to the fashion of the Nazarenes. The brow high and open; the complexion clear, with a delicate tinge of red; the aspect frank and pleasing; the nose and mouth finely formed; the beard thick, parted, and the colour of the hair; the eyes blue, and exceedingly bright. * * * His countenance was of wonderful sweetness and gravity; no one ever saw him laugh, though he was seen to weep; his stature was tall; the hands and arms finely formed. * * * He was the most beautiful of the sons of men."

† Raoul Rochette, p. 26.

BOOK IV.

tant painting, that on the vault of the cemetery of St. Callistus, in which the Saviour is represented as far as his bust, like the images on bucklers in use among the Romans.* A later painting, in the chapel of the cemetery of St. Pontianus, resembles this †; and a third was discovered in the catacomb of St. Callistus by Boldetti, but unfortunately perished while he was looking at it, in the attempt to remove it from the wall. The same countenance appears on some, but not the earliest, reliefs on the sarcophagi, five of which may be referred, according to M. Rochette, to the time of Julian. Of one, that of Olybrius, the date appears certain — the close of the fourth century. These, the paintings at least, are no doubt the work of Greek artists; and this head may be considered the archetype, the Hieratic model, of the Christian conception of the Saviour, imagined in the East, and generally adopted in the West.‡

The Father rarely represented.

Reverential awe, diffidence in their own skill, the still dominant sense of the purely spiritual nature of the Parental Deity§, or perhaps the ex-

* Bottari, Pitture e Sculture Sacre, vol. ii. tav. lxx. p. 42.

† This, however, was probably repainted in the time of Hadrian I.

‡ Rumohr considers a statue of the Good Shepherd in the Vatican collection, from its style, to be a very early work; the oldest monument of Christian sculpture, prior to the urn of Junius Bassus, which is of the middle of the fourth century. Italienische Forschungen, vol. i. p. 168. In that usually thought the earliest, that of Junius Bassus, Jesus Christ is represented between the Apostles, beardless, seated in a curule chair, with a roll half unfolded in his hand, and under his feet a singular representation of the upper part of a man holding an inflated veil with his two hands, a common symbol or personification of heaven. See R. Rochette, p. 43., who considers these sarcophagi anterior to the formation of the ordinary type.

§ Compare Munter, ii. p. 49. Nefas habent docti ejus (ecclesiæ Catholicæ) credere Deum figurâ humani corporis terminatum. August. Conf. vi. 11.

clusive habit of dwelling upon the Son as the direct object of religious worship, restrained early Christian art from those attempts to which we are scarcely reconciled by the sublimity and originality of Michael Angelo and Raffaelle. Even the symbolic representation of the Father was rare. Where it does appear, it is under the symbol of an immense hand issuing from a cloud, or a ray of light streaming from heaven, to imply, it may be presumed, the creative and all-enlightening power of the Universal Father.*

The Virgin Mother could not but offer herself to the imagination, and be accepted at once as the subject of Christian art. As respect for the mother of Christ deepened into reverence, reverence bowed down to adoration; as she became the mother of God, and herself a deity in popular worship, this worship was the parent, and, in some sense, the offspring of art. Augustine indeed admits that the real features of the Virgin, as of the Saviour, were unknown.† But the fervent language of Jerome shows that art had already attempted to shadow out the conception of mingling

The Virgin.

* M. Emeric David (in his Discours sur les Anciens Monumens, to which I am indebted for much information), says that the French artists had first the *heureuse hardiesse* of representing the Eternal Father under the human form. The instance to which he alludes is contained in a Latin Bible (in the Cabinet Imperial) cited by Montfaucon, but not fully described. It was presented to Charles the Bold by the canons of the church of Tours, in the year 850. This period is far beyond the bounds of our present history. See therefore E. David, pp. 43. 46.

† Neque enim novimus faciem Virginis Mariæ. Augustin. de Trin. c. viii. Ut ipsa corporis facies simulacrum fuerit mentis, figura probitatis. Ambros. de Virgin. lib. ii. c. 2.

BOOK IV.

virgin purity and maternal tenderness, which as yet probably was content to dwell within the verge of human nature, and aspired not to mingle a divine idealism with these more mortal feelings. The outward form and countenance could not but be the image of the purity and gentleness of the soul within: and this primary object of Christian art could not but give rise to one of its characteristic distinctions from that of the ancients, the substitution of mental expression for purely corporeal beauty. As reverential modesty precluded all exposure of the form, the countenance was the whole picture. This reverence, indeed, in the very earliest specimens of the art, goes still further, and confines itself to the expression of composed and dignified attitude. The artists did not even venture to expose the face. With one exception, the Virgin appears veiled on the reliefs on the sarcophagi, and in the earliest paintings. The oldest known picture of the Virgin is in the catacomb of St. Callistus, in which she appears seated in the calm majesty, and in the dress, of a Roman matron. It is the transition, as it were, from ancient to modern art, which still timidly adheres to its conventional type of dignity.* But in the sarcophagi, art has already more nearly approximated to its most exquisite subject — the Virgin Mother is seated, with the divine child in her lap, receiving the homage of the Wise Men.

* Bottari, Pitture e Sculture Sacre, t. iii. p. 111. tav. 218. See Mémoire de M. Raoul Rochette, Académ. Inscript.

She is still veiled*, but with the rounded form and grace of youth, and a kind of sedate chastity of expression in her form, which seems designed to convey the feeling of gentleness and holiness. Two of these sarcophagi, one in the Vatican collection, and one at Milan, appear to disprove the common notion that the representation of the Virgin was unknown before the Council of Ephesus.† That council, in its zeal against the doctrines of Nestorius, established, as it has been called, a Hieratic type of the Virgin, which is traced throughout Byzantine art, and on the coins of the Eastern empire. This type, however, gradually degenerates with the darkness of the age, and the decline of art. The countenance, sweetly smiling on the child, becomes sad and severe. The head is bowed with a gloomy and almost sinister expression, and the countenance gradually darkens, till it assumes a black colour, and seems to adapt itself in this respect to an ancient tradition. At length even the sentiment of maternal affection is effaced, both the mother and child become stiff and lifeless, the child is swathed in tight bands, and has an expression of pain rather than of gentleness or placid infancy.‡

* In Bottari there is one picture of the Virgin with the head naked. t. ii. tav. cxxvi. The only one known to M. Raoul Rochette.

† A. D. 431. This opinion is maintained by Basnage and most Protestant writers.

‡ Compare Raoul Rochette, page 35. M. R. Rochette observes much similarity between the pictures of the Virgin ascribed to St. Luke, the tradition of whose painting ascends to the sixth century, and the Egyptian works which represent Isis nursing Horus. I have not thought it necessary to notice further these palpable forgeries, though the object, in so many places, of popular worship.

BOOK IV.

The Apostles.

The apostles, particularly St. Peter and St. Paul, were among the earlier objects of Christian art. Though in one place, St. Augustine asserts that the persons of the Apostles were equally unknown with that of the Saviour, in another he acknowledges that their pictures were exhibited on the walls of many churches for the edification of the faithful.* In a vision ascribed to Constantine, but of very doubtful authority, the Emperor is said to have recognised the apostles by their likeness to their portraits.† A picture known to St. Ambrose pretended to have come down by regular tradition from their time: and Chrysostom, when he studied the writings, gazed with reverence on what he supposed an authentic likeness of the apostle.‡ Paul and Peter appear on many of the oldest monuments, on the glass vessels, fragments of which have been discovered, and on which Jerome informs us that they were frequently painted. They are found, as we have seen, on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, and on many others. In one of these, in which the costume is Roman, St. Paul is represented bald, and with the high nose, as he is described in the Philopatris §, which, whatever its age, has evidently taken these personal peculiarities of the

* St. Augustin in Genesin, cap. xxii. Quod pluribus locis simul eos (apostolos) cum illo (Christo) pictos viderint * * * in pictis parietibus. Augustin. de Cons. Evang. i. 16.

† Hadrian I. Epist. ad Imp. Constantin. et Iren. Concil. Nic. ii. art. 2.

‡ These two assertions rest on the authority of Joannes Damascenus, de Imagin.

§ Γαλιλαῖος ἀναφαλαντίας ἐπίῤῥινος. Philop. c. xii.

Apostle from the popular Christian representations. St. Peter has usually a single tuft of hair on his bald forehead.* Each has a book, the only symbol of his apostleship. St. Peter has neither the sword nor the keys. In the same relief, St. John and St. James are distinguished from the rest by their youth; already, therefore, this peculiarity was established which prevails throughout Christian art. The majesty of age, and a kind of dignity of precedence, are attributed to Peter and Paul, while all the grace of youth, and the most exquisite gentleness, are centered in John. They seem to have assumed this peculiar character of expression, even before their distinctive symbols. CHAP. IV.

It may excite surprise that the acts of martyrdom did not become the subjects of Christian art, till far down in the dark ages. That of St. Sebastian, a relief in terra-cotta, which formerly existed in the cemetery of St. Priscilla, and that of Peter and Paul in the Basilica Siciniana, assigned by Ciampini to the fifth century, are rare exceptions, and both of doubtful date and authenticity. The martyrdom of St. Felicitas and her seven children, discovered in 1812, in a small oratory within the baths of Titus, cannot be earlier, according to M. R. Rochette, than the seventh century.† Martyrdom not represented.

The absence of all gloomy or distressing subjects

* Munter says the arrest of St. Peter (Acts xii. 1. 3.) is the only subject from the Acts of the Apostles among the monuments in the catacombs. ii. p. 104.

† Raoul Rochette, in Mém. de l'Académie, tom. xiii. p. 165.

BOOK IV.

is the remarkable and characteristic feature in the catacombs of Rome and in all the earliest Christian art. A modern writer, who has studied the subject with profound attention, has expressed himself in the following language * : — " The catacombs destined for the sepulture of the primitive Christians, for a long time peopled with martyrs, ornamented during times of persecution, and under the dominion of melancholy thoughts and painful duties, nevertheless every where represent in all the historic parts of these paintings only what is noble and exalted †, and in that which constitutes the purely decorative part only pleasing and graceful subjects, the images of the good shepherd, representations of the vintage, of the agape, with pastoral scenes: the symbols are fruits, flowers, palms, crowns, lambs, doves, in a word nothing but what excites emotions of joy, innocence, and charity. Entirely occupied with the celestial recompense which awaited them after the trials of their troubled life, and often of so dreadful a death, the Christians saw in death, and even in execution, only a way by which they arrived at this everlasting happiness; and far from associating with this image that of the tortures or privations which opened heaven before them, they took pleasure in enlivening it with smiling colours, or presented it under agreeable symbols, adorning it with flowers and vine leaves; for it is thus that the asylum of death

* M. D'Agincourt says, " Il n'a rencontré lui-même dans ces souterrains aucune trace de nul autre tableau (one of barbarian and late design had before been noticed) représentant une martyre. Hist. de l'Art.

† Des traits héroiques.

appears to us in the Christian catacombs. There is no sign of mourning, no token of resentment, no expression of vengeance; all breathes softness, benevolence, charity."*

The crucifix.

It may seem even more singular, that the passion of our Lord himself remained a subject interdicted, as it were, by awful reverence. The cross, it has been said, was the symbol of Christianity many centuries before the crucifix.† It was rather a cheerful and consolatory than a depressing and melancholy sign; it was adorned with flowers, with crowns, and precious stones, a pledge of the resurrection, rather than a memorial of the passion. The catacombs of Rome, faithful to their general character, offer no instance of a crucifixion, nor does any allusion to such a subject of art occur in any early writer.‡ Cardinal Bona gives the following as the progress of the gradual change. I. The simple cross. II. The cross with the lamb at the foot of it.§ III. Christ clothed, on the cross, with hands uplifted in prayer, but not nailed to it.

* Gregory of Nyssa, however, describes the heroic acts of St. Theodorus as painted on the walls of a church dedicated to that saint. "The painter had represented his sufferings, the forms of the tyrants like wild beasts. The fiery furnace, the death of the athlete of Christ—all this had the painter expressed by colours, as in a book, and adorned the temple like a pleasant and blooming meadow. The dumb walls speak and edify.

† See, among other authorities, Munter, page 77. Es ist unmöglich das alter der Crucifixe genau zu bestimmen. Vor dem Ende des siebenten Jahrhunderts kannte die Kirche sie nicht.

‡ The decree of the Quinisextan Council, in 695, is the clearest proof that up to that period the Passion had been usually represented under a symbolic or allegoric form.

§ Sub cruce sanguineâ niveo stat Christus in agno,
Agnus ut innocua injusto datur hostia letho.
Paull. Nolan, Epist. 32.

BOOK IV.

IV. Christ fastened to the cross with four nails, still living, and with open eyes. He was not represented as dead till the tenth or eleventh century.* There is some reason to believe that the bust of the Saviour first appeared on the cross, and afterwards the whole person; the head was at first erect, with some expression of divinity; by degrees it drooped with the agony of pain, the face was wan and furrowed, and death, with all its anguish, was imitated by the utmost power of coarse art — mere corporeal suffering without sublimity, all that was painful in truth, with nothing that was tender and affecting. This change took place among the monkish artists of the Lower Empire. Those of the order of St. Basil introduced it into the West; and from that time these painful images, with those of martyrdom, and every scene of suffering, which could be imagined by the gloomy fancy of anchorites, who could not be moved by less violent excitement, spread throughout Christendom. It required all the wonderful magic of Italian art to elevate them into sublimity.

But early Christian art, at least that of painting, was not content with these simpler subjects; it endeavoured to represent designs of far bolder and more intricate character. Among the earliest descriptions of Christian painting is that in the Church of St. Felix, by Paulinus of Nola.† In the

Paintings at Nola.

* De cruce Vaticanâ.

† The lines are not without merit: —

Quo duce Jordanes suspenso gurgite fixis
Fluctibus, a facie divinæ restitit arcæ.

colonnades of that church were painted scenes from the Old Testament: among them were the Passage of the Red Sea, Joshua and the Ark of God, Ruth and her Sister-in-law, one deserting, the other following her parent in fond fidelity* ; an emblem, the poet suggests, of mankind, part deserting, part adhering to the true faith. The object of this embellishment of the churches was to beguile the rude minds of the illiterate peasants who thronged with no very exalted motives to the altar of St. Felix— to preoccupy their minds with sacred subjects, so that they might be less eager for the festival banquets, held with such munificence and with such a concourse of strangers, at the tomb of the martyr.†

Vis nova divisit flumen: pars amne recluso
Constitit, et fluvii pars in mare lapsa cucurrit,
Destituitque vadum: et validus qui forte ruebat
Impetus, adstrictas altè cumulaverat undas,
Et tremulâ compage minax pendebat aquæ mons
Despectans transire pedes arente profundo ;
Et medio pedibus siccis in flumine ferri
Pulverulenta hominum duro vestigia limo.

If this description is drawn from the picture, not from the book, the painter must have possessed some talent for composition and for landscape, as well as for the drawing of figures.

* Quum geminæ scindunt sese in diversa sorores;
Ruth sequitur sanctam, quam deserit Orpa, parentem :
Perfidiam nurus una, fidem nurus altera monstrat.
Præfert una Deum patriæ, patriam altera vitæ.

† Forte requiratur, quanam ratione gerendi
Sederit hæc nobis sententia, pingere sanctas
Raro more domos animantibus adsimulatis.
* * * turba frequentior hic est

BOOK IV.

These gross and irreligious desires led them to the church; yet, gazing on these pictures, they would not merely be awakened by these holy examples to purer thoughts and holier emotions; they would feast their eyes instead of their baser appetites; an involuntary sobriety and forgetfulness of the wine flagon would steal over their souls; at all events, they would have less time to waste in the indulgence of their looser festivity.

Music.

Christianity has been the parent of music, probably as far surpassing in skill and magnificence the compositions of earlier times, as the cathedral organ the simpler instruments of the Jewish or Pagan religious worship. But this perfection of the art belongs to a much later period in Christian his-

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Rusticitas non casta fide, neque docta legendi.
Hæc adsueta diù sacris servire profanis,
Ventre Deo, tandem convertitur advena Christo,
Dum sanctorum opera in Christo miratur aperta.
Propterea visum nobis opus utile, totis
Felicis domibus picturâ illudere sanctâ:
Si forte attonitas hæc per spectacula mentes
Agrestum caperet fucata coloribus umbra,
Quæ super exprimitur literis — ut littera monstret
Quod manus explicuit: dumque omnes picta vicissim
Ostendunt releguntque sibi, vel tardius escæ
Sunt memores, dum grata oculis jejunia pascunt:
Atque ita se melior stupefactis inserat usus,
Dum fallit pictura famem; sanctasque legenti
Historias castorum operum subrepit honestas
Exemplis inducta piis; potatur hianti
Sobrietas, nimii subeunt oblivia vini:
Dumque diem ducunt spatio majore tuentes,
Pocula rarescunt, quia per mirantia tracto
Tempore, jam paucæ superant epulantibus horæ.
In Natal. Felic., Poema xxiv.

tory. Like the rest of its service, the music of the Church no doubt grew up from a rude and simple, to a more splendid and artificial form. The practice of singing hymns is coeval with Christianity; the hearers of the Apostles sang the praises of God; and the first sound which reached the Pagan ear from the secluded sanctuaries of Christianity was the hymn to Christ as God. The Church succeeded to an inheritance of religious lyrics as unrivalled in the history of poetry as of religion.* The Psalms were introduced early into the public service; but at first, apparently, though some psalms may have been sung on appropriate occasions—the 73d, called the morning, and the 141st, the evening psalm—the whole Psalter was introduced only as part of the Old Testament, and read in the course of the service.† With the poetry did they borrow the music of the Synagogue? Was this music the same which had filled the spacious courts of the Temple, perhaps answered to those sad strains which had been heard beside the waters of the Euphrates, or even descended from still earlier times of glory, when Deborah or when Miriam struck their harps to the praise of God? This question it must be impossible to answer; and no tradition, as far as we

* The Temple Service, in Lightfoot's works, gives the Psalms which were appropriate to each day. The author has given a slight outline of this hymnology of the Temple in the Quarterly Review vol. xxxviii. page 20.

† Bingham's Antiquities, vol. xiv, p. 1. 5.

BOOK IV.

are aware, indicates the source from which the Church borrowed her primitive harmonies, though the probability is certainly in favour of their Jewish parentage.

The Christian hymns of the primitive churches seem to have been confined to the glorification of their God and Saviour.* Prayer was considered the language of supplication and humiliation; the soul awoke, as it were, in the hymn, to more ardent expressions of gratitude and love. Probably, the music was nothing more at first than a very simple accompaniment, or no more than the accordance of the harmonious voices; it was the humble subsidiary of the hymn of praise, not itself the soul-engrossing art.† Nothing could be more simple than the earliest recorded hymns; they were fragments from the Scripture—the doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;" the angelic hymn, "Glory be to God on high;" the cherubic hymn from Revel. iv. 12.—"Holy, holy, holy;" the hymn of victory, Rev. xv. 3., "Great and marvellous are thy works." It was not improbably the cherubic hymn, to which Pliny alludes, as forming part of the Christian worship. The "Magnificat" and the "Nunc dimittis" were likewise sung from the earliest ages; the Halleluia was the constant prelude

* Gregory of Nyssa defines a hymn—*ὕμνος ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπὶ τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἡμῖν ἀγαθοῖς ἀνατιθεμένη τῷ Θεῷ εὐφημία.* See Psalm ii.

† Private individuals wrote hymns to Christ, which were generally sung. Euseb. H. E. v. 28.; vii. 24.

CHAP. IV.

or burden of the hymn.* Of the character of the music few and imperfect traces are found. In Egypt the simplest form long prevailed. In the monastic establishments one person arose and repeated the psalm, the others sate around in silence on their lowly seats, and responded, as it were, to the psalm within their hearts.† In Alexandria, by the order of Athanasius, the psalms were repeated with the slightest possible inflection of voice; it could hardly be called singing.‡ Yet, though the severe mind of Athanasius might disdain such subsidiaries, the power of music was felt to be a dangerous antagonist in the great religious contest. Already the soft and effeminate singing introduced by Paul of Samosata, had estranged the hearts of many worshippers, and his peculiar doctrines had stolen into the soul, which had been melted by the artificial melodies, introduced by him into the service. The Gnostic hymns of Bardesanes and Valentinus§, no doubt, had their musical accompaniment. Arius

* Alleluia novis balat ovile choris.
Paulin. Epist. ad Sev. 12.

Curvorum hinc chorus helciariorum,
Responsantibus Alleluia ripis,
Ad Christum levat amnicum celeusma.
Sid. Apoll. lib. ii. ep. 10.

† Absque eo qui dicturus in medium Psalmos surrexerit, cuncti sedilibus humillimis insidentes, ad vocem psallentis omni cordis intentione dependent. Cassian. Instit. ii. 12. Compare Euseb. H. E. ii. 17. Apostol. Constit. xx. 57.

‡ Tam modico flexu vocis faciebat sonare lectorem Psalmi, ut pronuncianti vicinior esset quam canenti. August. Confess. x. 33.

§ Tertull. de Carn. Christi, 17.

BOOK IV.

himself had composed hymns which were sung to popular airs; and the streets of Constantinople, even to the time of Chrysostom, echoed at night to those seductive strains which denied or imperfectly expressed the Trinitarian doctrines. Chrysostom arrayed a band of orthodox choristers, who hymned the coequal Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Donatists in Africa adapted their enthusiastic hymns to wild and passionate melodies, which tended to keep up and inflame, as it were, with the sound of the trumpet, the fanaticism of their followers.*

The first change in the manner of singing was the substitution of singers†, who became a separate order in the Church, for the mingled voices of all ranks, ages, and sexes, which was compared by the great reformer of church music to the glad sound of many waters.‡

The antiphonal singing, in which the different sides of the choir answered to each other in responsive verses, was first introduced at Antioch by Flavianus and Diodorus. Though, from the form of some of the psalms, it is not improbable that this system of alternate chanting may have prevailed in the Temple service, yet the place and the period of its appearance in the Christian Church seems to indi-

* Donatistæ nos reprehendunt, quod sobriè psallimus in ecclesia divina cantica Prophetarum, cum ipsi ebrietates suas ad canticum psalmorum humano ingenio compositorum, quasi tubas exhortationis inflammant. Augustin. Confess.

† Compare Bingham. The leaders were called ὑποβολεῖς.

‡ Responsoriis psalmorum, cantu mulierum, virginum, parvularum consonans undarum fragor resultat. Ambros. Hexam. l. iii. c 5.

cate a different source. The strong resemblance which it bears to the chorus of the Greek tragedy, might induce a suspicion, that as it borrowed its simple primitive music from Judaism, it may, in turn, have despoiled Paganism of some of its lofty religious harmonies.

This antiphonal chanting was introduced into the West* by Ambrose, and if it inspired, or even fully accompanied the Te Deum, usually ascribed to that prelate, we cannot calculate too highly its effect upon the Christian mind. So beautiful was the music in the Ambrosian service, that the sensitive conscience of the young Augustine took alarm, lest, when he wept at the solemn music, he should be yielding to the luxury of sweet sounds, rather than imbibing the devotional spirit of the hymn.† Though alive to the perilous pleasure, yet he inclined to the wisdom of awakening weaker minds to piety by this enchantment of their hearing. The Ambrosian chant, with its more simple and masculine tones, is still preserved in the Church of Milan; in the rest of Italy it was superseded by the richer

* Augustin. Confess. ix. 7. 1. How indeed could it be rejected, when it had received the authority of a vision of the blessed Ignatius, who was said to have heard the angels singing in the antiphonal manner the praises of the Holy Trinity. Socr. H. E. vi. 8.

† Cum reminiscor lachrymas meas quas fudi ad cantus ecclesiæ tuæ, in primordiis recuperatæ fidei meæ, et nunc ipsum cum moveor, non cantu sed rebus quæ cantantur, cum liquidâ voce et convenientissimâ modulatione cantantur: magnam instituti hujus utilitatem rursus agnosco. Ita fluctuo inter periculum voluptatis et experimentum salubritatis; magisque adducor, non quidem irretractabilem sententiam proferens cantandi consuetudinem approbare in ecclesiâ: ut per oblectamenta aurium, infirmior animus in affectum pietatis assurgat. Augustin. Confess. x. 33. 3. Compare ix. 7. 2.

BOOK IV.

Roman chant, which was introduced by the Pope, Gregory the Great.*

* The cathedral chanting of England has probably almost alone preserved the ancient antiphonal system, which has been discarded for a greater variety of instruments, and a more complicated system of music, in the Roman Catholic service. This, if I may presume to offer a judgment, has lost as much in solemnity and majesty as it has gained in richness and variety. Ce chant (le Plain Chant) tel qu'il subsiste encore aujourd'hui est un reste bien défiguré, mais bien precieux de l'ancienne musique, qui après avoir passé par la main des barbares n'a pas perdu encore toutes ses premières beautés. Millin, Dictionnaire des Beaux Arts.

CHAP. V.

CONCLUSION.

Thus, then, Christianity had become the religion of the Roman world: it had not, indeed, confined its adventurous spirit of moral conquest within these limits; yet it is in the Roman world that its more extensive and permanent influence, as well as its peculiar vicissitudes, can alone be followed out with distinctness and accuracy.

Paganism was slowly expiring; the hostile edicts of the emperors, down to the final legislation of Justinian, did but accelerate its inevitable destiny. Its temples, where not destroyed, were perishing by neglect and peaceful decay, or, where their solid structures defied these less violent assailants, stood deserted and overgrown with weeds; the unpaid priests ceased to offer, not only sacrifice, but prayer, and were gradually dying out as a separate order of men. Its philosophy lingered in a few cities of Greece, till the economy or the religion of the Eastern Emperor finally closed its schools.

The doom of the Roman empire was likewise sealed: the horizon on all sides was dark with overwhelming clouds; and the internal energies of the empire, the military spirit, the wealth, the imperial power, had crumbled away. The exter-

BOOK IV.

nal unity was dissolved; the provinces were gradually severed from the main body; the Western empire was rapidly sinking, and the Eastern falling into hopeless decrepitude. Yet though her external polity was dissolved, though her visible throne was prostrate upon the earth, Rome still ruled the mind of man, and her secret domination maintained its influence, until it assumed a new outward form. Rome survived in her laws, in her municipal institutions, and in that which lent a new sanctity and reverence to her laws, and gave strength by their alliance with its own peculiar polity to the municipal institutions — in her adopted religion. The empire of Christ succeeded to the empire of the Cæsars.

When it ascended the throne, assumed a supreme and universal dominion over mankind, became the legislator, not merely through public statutes, but in all the minute details of life, discharged, in fact, almost all the functions of civil as well as of religious government, Christianity could not but appear under a new form, and wear a far different appearance than when it was the humble and private faith of a few scattered individuals, or only spiritually connected communities. As it was about to enter into its next period of conflict with barbarism, and undergo the temptation of unlimited power, however it might depart from its primitive simplicity, and indeed recede from its genuine spirit, it is impossible not to observe how wonderfully (those who contemplate human affairs with religious minds may assert how providentially) it adapted itself to

its altered position, and the new part which it was to fulfil in the history of man. We have already traced this gradual change in the formation of the powerful Hierarchy, in the development of Monasticism, the establishment of the splendid and imposing Ritual; we must turn our attention, before we close, to the new modification of the religion itself.

Its theology now appears wrought out into a regular, multifarious, and, as it were, legally established system.

Christian theology of this period.

It was the consummate excellence of Christianity, that it blended in apparently indissoluble union religious and moral perfection. Its essential doctrine was, in its pure theory, inseparable from humane, virtuous, and charitable disposition. Piety to God, as he was impersonated in Christ, worked out, as it seemed, by spontaneous energy into Christian beneficence.

But there has always been a strong propensity to disturb this nice balance: the dogmatic part of religion, the province of faith, is constantly endeavouring to set itself apart, and to maintain a separate existence. Faith, in this limited sense, aspires to be religion. This, in general, takes place soon after the first outburst, the strong impulse of new and absorbing religious emotions. At a later period morality attempts to stand alone, without the sanction or support of religious faith. One half of Christianity is thus perpetually striving to pass for the whole, and to absorb all the attention, to the neglect, to the disparagement, at length to a total

BOOK IV.

separation from its heaven-appointed consort. The multiplication and subtle refinement of theologic dogmas, the engrossing interest excited by some dominant tenet, especially if they are associated with, or embodied in, a minute and rigorous ceremonial, tend to satisfy and lull the mind into complacent acquiescence in its own religious completeness. But directly religion began to consider itself something apart, something exclusively dogmatic or exclusively ceremonial, an acceptance of certain truths by the belief, or the discharge of certain ritual observances, the transition from separation to hostility was rapid and unimpeded.* No sooner had Christianity divorced morality as its inseparable companion through life, than it formed an unlawful connection with any dominant passion; and the strange and unnatural union of Christian faith with ambition, avarice, cruelty, fraud, and even licence, appeared in strong contrast with its primitive harmony of doctrine and inward disposition. Thus in a great degree, while the Roman world became Christian in outward worship and in faith, it remained Heathen, or even at some periods worse than in the better times of Heathenism, as to beneficence, gentleness, purity, social virtue, humanity, and peace. This extreme view may appear to be justified by the general survey of Christian society. Yet, in fact, religion did not, except at the darkest periods, so completely insulate itself, or so entirely recede from its natural alliance with morality, though it admitted, at each of its periods,

Separation of Christian faith and Christian morals

never complete.

* Compare Vol. III. p. 408.

much which was irreconcilable with its pure and original spirit. Hence the mingled character of its social and political, as well as of its personal influences. The union of Christianity with monachism, with sacerdotal domination, with the military spirit, with the spiritual autocracy of the papacy, with the advancement at one time, at another with the repression, of the human mind, had each their darker and brighter side; and were in succession (however they departed from the primal and ideal perfection of Christianity) to a certain extent beneficial, because apparently almost necessary to the social and intellectual development of mankind at each particular juncture. So, for instance, military Christianity, which grew out of the inevitable incorporation of the force and energy of the barbarian conquerors with the sentiments and feelings of that age, and which finally produced chivalry, was, in fact, the substitution of inhumanity for Christian gentleness, of the love of glory for the love of peace. Yet was this indispensable to the preservation of Christianity in its contest with its new eastern antagonist. Unwarlike Christianity would have been trampled under foot, and have been in danger of total extermination, by triumphant Mohammedanism.

Christian feelings never extinct.

Yet even when its prevailing character thus stood in the most direct contrast with the spirit of the Gospel, it was not merely that the creed of Christianity in its primary articles was universally accepted, and a profound devotion filled the Christian mind, there was likewise a constant under-growth, as it were, of Christian feelings, and even of Chris-

BOOK IV.

tian virtues. Nothing could contrast more strangely, for instance, than St. Louis slaughtering Saracens and heretics with his remorseless sword, and the Saviour of mankind by the Lake of Galilee; yet, when this dominant spirit of the age did not preoccupy the whole soul, the self-denial, the purity, even the gentleness of such a heart bore still unanswerable testimony to the genuine influence of Christianity. Our illustration has carried us far beyond the boundaries of our history, but already the great characteristic distinction of later Christian history had begun to be developed, the severance of Christian faith from Christian love, the passionate attachment, the stern and remorseless maintenance of the Christian creed, without or with only a partial practice of Christian virtue, or even the predominance of a tone of mind, in some respects absolutely inconsistent with genuine Christianity. While the human mind, in general, became more rigid in exacting, and more timid in departing from, the admitted doctrines of the church, the moral sense became more dull and obtuse to the purer and more evanescent beauty of Christian holiness. In truth it was so much more easy, in a dark and unreasoning age, to subscribe, or at least to render passive submission to, certain defined doctrines, than to work out those doctrines in their proper influences upon the life, that we deplore, rather than wonder at, this substitution of one half of the Christian religion for the whole. Nor are we astonished to find those, who were constantly violating the primary principles of Christianity, fiercely resenting, and, if they had the

power, relentlessly avenging, any violation of the integrity of Christian faith. Heresy of opinion, we have seen, became almost the only crime, against which excommunication pointed its thunders: the darker and more baleful heresy of unchristian passions, which assumed the language of Christianity, was either too general to be detected, or at best encountered with feeble and impotent remonstrance. Thus Christianity became at the same time more peremptorily dogmatic, and less influential; it assumed the supreme dominion over the mind, while it held but an imperfect and partial control over the passions and affections. The theology of the Gospel was the religion of the world; the spirit of the Gospel very far from the ruling influence of mankind. CHAP. V.

Yet even the theology maintained its dominion, by in some degree accommodating itself to the human mind. It became to a certain degree *mythic* in its character, and *polytheistic* in its form.

Now had commenced what may be called, neither unreasonably nor unwarrantably, the mythic age of Christianity. As Christianity worked downward into the lower classes of society, as it received the rude and ignorant barbarians within its pale, the general effect could not but be, that the age would drag down the religion to its level, rather than the religion elevate the age to its own lofty standard. Mythic age of Christianity.

The connection between the world of man and a higher order of things had been re-established; the approximation of the Godhead to the human race, the actual presence of the Incarnate Deity

BOOK IV.

upon earth, was universally recognised; transcendental truths, beyond the sphere of human reason, had become the primary and elemental principles of human belief. A strongly imaginative period was the necessary consequence of this extraordinary impulse. It was the reign of faith, of faith which saw or felt the divine, or at least supernatural, agency, in every occurrence of life, and in every impulse of the heart; which offered itself as the fearless and undoubting interpreter of every event; which comprehended in its domain the past, the present, and the future; and seized upon the whole range of human thought and knowledge, upon history, and even natural philosophy, as its own patrimony.

Faith.

This was not, it could not be, that more sublime theology of a rational and intellectual Christianity; that theology which expands itself as the system of the universe expands upon the mind; and from its wider acquaintance with the wonderful provisions, the more manifest and all-provident forethought of the Deity, acknowledges with more awestruck and admiring, yet not less fervent and grateful, homage the beneficence of the Creator; that Christian theology which reverentially traces the benignant providence of God over the affairs of men — the all-ruling Father — the Redeemer revealed at the appointed time, and publishing the code of reconciliation, holiness, peace, and everlasting life — the Universal Spirit, with its mysterious and confest, but untraceable energy, pervading the kindred spiritual part of man. The Christian of these days lived in a supernatural world, or in a

world under the constant and felt and discernible interference of supernatural power. God was not only present, but asserting his presence at every instant, not merely on signal occasions and for important purposes, but on the most insignificant acts and persons. The course of nature was beheld, not as one great uniform and majestic miracle, but as a succession of small, insulated, sometimes trivial, sometimes contradictory interpositions, often utterly inconsistent with the moral and Christian attributes of God. The divine power and goodness were not spreading abroad like a genial and equable sunlight, enlightening, cheering, vivifying, but breaking out in partial and visible flashes of influence; each incident was a special miracle, the ordinary emotion of the heart was divine inspiration. Each individual had not merely his portion in the common diffusion of religious and moral knowledge or feeling, but looked for his peculiar and especial share in the divine blessing. His dreams came direct from heaven, a new system of Christian omens succeeded the old; witchcraft merely invoked Beelzebub, or Satan instead of Hecate; hallowed places only changed their tutelary nymph or genius for a saint or martyr. CHAP. V.

Imaginative state of the human mind.

It is not less unjust to stigmatise in the mass as fraud, or to condemn as the weakness of superstition, than it is to enforce as an essential part of Christianity, that which was the necessary development of this state of the human mind. The case was this,—the mind of man had before it a recent and wonderful revelation, in which it could not but

BOOK IV.

acknowledge the divine interposition. God had been brought down, or had condescended to mingle himself with the affairs of men. But where should that faith, which could not but receive these high, and consolatory, and reasonable truths, set limits to the agency of this beneficent power? How should it discriminate between that which in its apparent discrepancy with the laws of nature (and of those laws how little was known!) was miraculous; and that which, to more accurate observation, was only strange or wonderful, or perhaps the result of ordinary but dimly seen causes? how still more in the mysterious world of the human mind, of which the laws are still, we will not say in their primitive, but in comparison with those of external nature, in profound obscurity? If the understanding of man was too much dazzled to see clearly even material objects; if just awakening from a deep trance, it beheld every thing floating before it in a mist of wonder, how much more was the mind disqualified to judge of its own emotions, of the origin, suggestion, and powers, of those thoughts and emotions, which still perplex and baffle our deepest metaphysics.

The irresistible current of man's thoughts and feelings ran all one way. It is difficult to calculate the effect of that extraordinary power or propensity of the mind to see what it expects to see, to colour with the preconceived hue of its own opinions and sentiments whatever presents itself before it. The contagion of emotions or of passions, which in vast assemblies may be resolved, perhaps, into a physical effect, acts, it should seem, in a more extensive manner; opinions and feelings appear to

be propagated with a kind of epidemic force and rapidity. There were some, no doubt, who saw farther, but who either dared not, or did not care, to stand across the torrent of general feeling. But the mass, even of the strongest minded, were influenced, no doubt, by the profound religious dread of assuming that for an ordinary effect of nature, which *might be* a divine interposition. They were far more inclined to suspect reason of presumption than faith of credulity. Where faith is the height of virtue, and infidelity the depth of sin, tranquil investigation becomes criminal indifference, doubt guilty scepticism. Of all charges men shrink most sensitively, especially in a religious age, from that of irreligion, however made by the most ignorant or the most presumptuous. The clergy, the great agents in the maintenance and communication of this imaginative religious bias, the asserters of constant miracle in all its various forms, were themselves, no doubt, irresistibly carried away by the same tendency. It was treason against their order and their sacred duty, to arrest, or to deaden, whatever might tend to religious impression. Pledged by obligation, by feeling, we may add by interest, to advance religion, most were blind to, all closed their eyes against, the remote consequences of folly and superstition. A clergyman who, in a credulous or enthusiastic age, dares to be rationally pious, is a phenomenon of moral courage. From this time, either the charge of irreligion, or the not less dreadful and fatal suspicion of heresy or magic, was the penalty to be paid for the glorious privilege of

The clergy.

BOOK IV.

superiority to the age in which the man lived, or of the attainment to a higher and more reasonable theology.

Religious impressions.

The desire of producing religious impression was in a great degree the fertile parent of all the wild inventions which already began to be grafted on the simple creed of Christianity. That which was employed avowedly with this end in one generation, became the popular belief of the next. The full growth of all this religious poetry (for, though not in form, it was poetical in its essence) belongs to, and must be reserved for, a later period: Christian history would be incomplete without that of Christian popular superstition.

But though religion, and religion in this peculiar form, had thus swallowed up all other pursuits and sentiments, it cannot indeed be said, that this new mythic or imaginative period of the world suppressed the development of any strong intellectual energy, or arrested the progress of real knowledge and improvement. This, even if commenced, must have yielded to the devastating inroads of barbarism. But in truth, however high in some respects the civilisation of the Roman empire under the Antonines; however the useful, more especially the mechanical, arts must have attained, as their gigantic remains still prove, a high perfection, (though degenerate in point of taste, by the colossal solidity of their structure, the vast buildings, the roads, the aqueducts, the bridges, in every quarter of the world, bear testimony to the science as well as to the public spirit of the age,) still there

CHAP. V.

is a remarkable dearth, at this flourishing period, of great names in science and philosophy, as well as in literature.*

Effect on natural philosophy.

Principles may have been admitted, and may have begun to take firm root, though the authoritative writings of the Christian fathers, which, after a long period, would prove adverse to the free development of natural, moral, and intellectual philosophy; and, having been enshrined for centuries as a part of religious doctrine, would not easily surrender their claims to divine authority, or be deposed from their established supremacy. The church condemned Galileo on the authority of the fathers as much as of the sacred writings, at least on their irrefragable interpretation of the scriptures; and the denial of the antipodes by St. Augustine was alleged against the magnificent, but as it appeared to many no less impious than frantic, theory of Columbus.† The wild cosmogonical theories of the Gnostics and Manicheans, with the no less unsatisfactory hypotheses of the Greeks, tended, no doubt, to throw discredit on all kinds of physical study‡,

* Galen, as a writer on physic, may be quoted as an exception.

† It has been said, that the best mathematical science which the age could command was employed in the settlement of the question about Easter, decided at the Council of Nice.

‡ Brucker's observations on the physical knowledge, or rather on the professed contempt of physical knowledge, of the fathers, are characterised with his usual plain good sense. Their general language was that of Lactantius:—"Quanto faceret sapientius ac verius si exceptione factâ diceret caussas rationesque duntaxat rerum cœlestium seu naturalium, quia sunt abditæ, nesciri posse, quia nullus doceat, nec *quæri oportere*, quia *inveniri quærenda non possunt*. Qua exceptione interposita et physicos admonuisset ne quærerent ea, quæ modum excederent cogitationis humanæ, et se ipsum calumniæ invidiâ liberasset, et nobis certe dedisset aliquid, quod sequeremur." Div. Instit. iii. 2. See other quotations to the same effect:

BOOK IV.

and to establish the strictly literal exposition of the Mosaic history of the creation. The orthodox fathers, when they enlarge on the works of the six days, though they allow themselves largely in allegorical inference, have in general in view these strange theories, and refuse to depart from the strict letter of the history*; and the popular language, which was necessarily employed with regard to the earth and the movements of the heavenly bodies, became established as literal and immutable truth. The Bible, and the Bible interpreted by the fathers, became the code not of religion only, but of every branch of knowledge. If religion demanded the assent to a heaven-revealed, or heaven-sanctioned, theory of the physical creation, the whole history of man, from its commencement to its close, seemed to be established in still more distinct and explicit terms. Nothing was allowed for figurative or Oriental phraseology, nothing for that condescension to the dominant sentiments and state of knowledge, which may have been necessary to render each part of the sacred writings intelligible to that age in which it was composed. And if the origin of man was thus clearly revealed, the close of his history was still supposed, however each generation passed away undisturbed, to be still

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Brucker, Hist. Phil. iii. p. 357. The work of Cosmas Indicopleustes, edited by Montfaucon, is a curious example of the prevailing notions of physical science.

* Compare the Hexaemeron of Ambrose, and Brucker's sensible remarks on the pardonable errors of that great prelate. The evil was, not that the fathers fell into extraordinary errors on subjects of which they were ignorant, but that their errors were canonised by the blind veneration of later ages, which might have been better informed.

imminent and immediate. The day of judgment was before the eyes of the Christian, either instant, or at a very brief interval; it was not unusual, on a general view, to discern the signs of the old age and decrepitude of the world; and every great calamity was either the sign or the commencement of the awful consummation. Gregory I. beheld in the horrors of the Lombard invasion the visible approach of the last day; and it is not impossible that the doctrine of a purgatorial state was strengthened by this prevalent notion, which interposed only a limited space between the death of the individual and the final judgment.

But the popular belief was not merely a theology in its higher sense.

Polytheistic form of Christianity.

Christianity began to approach to a polytheistic form, or at least to permit, what it is difficult to call by any other name than polytheistic, habits and feelings of devotion. It attributed, however vaguely, to subordinate beings some of the inalienable powers and attributes of divinity. Under the whole of this form lay the sum of Christian doctrine; but that which was constantly presented to the minds of men was the host of subordinate, indeed, but still active and influential, mediators between the Deity and the world of man. Throughout (as has already been and will presently be indicated again)

* Depopulatæ urbes, eversa castra, concrematæ ecclesiæ, destructa sunt monasteria virorum et fœminarum, desolata ab hominibus prædia, atque ab omni cultore destituta; in solitudine vacat terra, occupaverunt bestiæ loca, quæ prius multitudo hominum tenebat. Nam in hac terrâ, in qua nos vivimus, finem suum mundus jam non nuntiat sed ostendit. Greg. Mag. Dial. iii. 38.

BOOK IV.

existed the vital and essential difference between Christianity and Paganism. It is possible that the controversies about the Trinity and the divine nature of Christ, tended indirectly to the promotion of this worship, of the Virgin, of angels, of saints and martyrs. The great object of the victorious, to a certain extent, of both parties, was the closest approximation, in one sense, the identification, of the Saviour with the unseen and incomprehensible Deity. Though the human nature of Christ was as strenuously asserted in theory, it was not dwelt upon with the same earnestness and constancy as his divine. To magnify, to purify this from all earthly leaven was the object of all eloquence: theologic disputes on this point withdrew or diverted the attention from the life of Christ as simply related in the Gospels. Christ became the object of a remoter, a more awful, adoration. The mind began therefore to seek out, or eagerly to seize, some other more material beings, in closer alliance with human sympathies. The constant propensity of man to humanise his Deity, checked, as it were, by the receding majesty of the Saviour, readily clung with its devotion to humbler objects.* The weak wing of the common and unenlightened mind could not soar to the unapproachable light in

* The progress of the worship of saints and angels has been fairly and impartially traced by Shröeck, Christliche Kirchengeschichte, viii. 161. *et seq.* In the account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, it is said, "we love the martyrs as disciples and followers of the Lord." The fathers of the next period leave the saints and martyrs in a kind of intermediate state, the bosom of Abraham or Paradise, as explained by Tertullian, contr. Marc. iv. 34. Apolyct. 47. Compare Irenæus. adv. Hær. v. c. 31. Justin, Dial. cum Tryph. Origen, Hom. vii. in Levit.

which Christ dwelt with the Father; it dropped to the earth, and bowed itself down before some less mysterious and infinite object of veneration. In theory it was always a different and inferior kind of worship; but the feelings, especially impassioned devotion, know no logic: they pause not; it would chill them to death if they were to pause for these fine and subtle distinctions. The gentle ascent by which admiration, reverence, gratitude, and love, swelled up to awe, to veneration, to worship, both as regards the feelings of the individual and the general sentiment, was imperceptible. Men passed from rational respect for the remains of the dead*, the communion of holy thought and emotion, which might connect the departed saint with his brethren in the flesh, to the superstitious veneration of relics, and the deification of mortal men, by so easy a transition, that they never discovered the precise point at which they transgressed the unmarked and unwatched boundary.

Worship of saints and angels.

This new polytheising Christianity therefore was still subordinate and subsidiary in the theologic creed to the true Christian worship, but it usurped its place in the heart, and rivalled it in the daily

* The growth of the worship of relics is best shown by the prohibitory law of Theodosius (A. D. 386.) against the removal and sale of saints' bodies. "Nemo martyres distrahat, nemo mercetur." Cod. Theodos. ix. 17. Augustine denies that worship was ever offered to apostles or saints. "Quis autem audivit aliquando fidelium stantem sacerdotem ad altare etiam super sanctum corpus martyris ad Dei honorem cultumque constructum, dicere in precibus, offero tibi sacrificium, Petre, vel Paule, vel Cypriane, cum apud eorum memorias offeratur Deo qui eos et homines et martyres fecit, et sanctis suis angelis cœlesti honore sociavit." De Civ. Dei, viii. 27. Compare xvii. 10. where he asserts miracles to be performed at their tombs.

BOOK IV.

language and practices of devotion. The worshipper felt and acknowledged his dependency, and looked for protection, or support, to these new intermediate beings, the intercessors with the great Intercessor. They were arrayed by the general belief in some of the attributes of the Deity,—ubiquity * ; the perpetual cognisance of the affairs of earth; they could hear the prayer†; they could read the heart; they could control nature; they had a power, derivative indeed from a higher source, but still exercised according to their volition, over all the events of the world. Thus each city, and almost each individual, began to have his tutelar saint; the presence of some beatified being hovered over and hallowed particular spots; and thus the strong influence of local and particular worships combined again with that great universal faith, of which the supreme Father was the sole object, and the universe the temple.‡ Still, however, this new

* Massuet, in his preface to Irenæus, p. cxxxvi. has adduced some texts from the fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries on the ubiquity of the saints and the Virgin.

† Perhaps the earliest instances of these are in the eulogies of the eastern martyrs, by Basil, Greg. Naz. and Greg. Nyssen. See especially the former on the Forty Martyrs. Ὁ θλιβόμενος, ἐπὶ τοὺς τεσσαράκοντα καταφεύγει, ὁ εὐφραινόμενος, ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἀποτρέχει, ὁ μὲν ἵνα λύσιν εὕρῃ τῶν δυσχερῶν, ὁ δὲ ἵνα φυλαχθῇ αὐτῷ τὰ χρηστότερα· ἐνταῦθα γυνὴ εὐσεβὴς ὑπὲρ τέκνων εὐχομένη καταλαμβάνεται, ἀποδημοῦντι ἀνδρὶ τὸν ἐπάνοδον αἰτουμενὴ, ἀῤῥωστοῦντι τὴν σωτηρίαν. Oper. vol. ii. p. 155. These and similar passages in Greg. Nazianzen (Orat. in Basil.) and Gregory of Nyssa (in Theodor. Martyr.) may be rhetorical ornaments, but their ignorant and enthusiastic hearers would not make much allowance for the fervour of eloquence.

‡ An illustration of the new form assumed by Christian worship may be collected from the works of Paulinus, who, in eighteen poems, celebrates the nativity of St. Felix the tutelary saint of Nola. St. Felix is at least invested in the powers ascribed to the intermediate deities of antiquity. Pilgrims crowded from the whole of the south of Italy to the festival of

polytheism differed in its influence, as well as in its nature, from that of Paganism. It bore a constant

St. Felix. Rome herself, though she possessed the altars of St. Peter and St. Paul, poured forth her myriads; the Capenian gate was choked, the Appian way was covered with the devout worshippers.[1] Multitudes came from beyond the sea. St. Felix is implored by his servants to remove the impediments to their pilgrimages from the hostility of men or adverse weather; to smooth the seas, and send propitious winds.[2] There is constant reference, indeed, to Christ[3] as the source of this power, yet the power is fully and explicitly assigned to the saint. He is the prevailing intercessor between the worshipper and Christ. But the vital distinctions between this paganising form of Christianity and Paganism itself is no less manifest in these poems. It is not merely as a tutelary deity in this life, that the saint is invoked; the future state of existence and the final judgment are constantly present to the thoughts of the worshipper. St. Felix is entreated after death to bear the souls of his worshippers into the bosom of the Redeemer, and to intercede for them at the last day.[4]

These poems furnish altogether a curious picture of the times, and show how early Christian Italy began to become what it is. The pilgrims brought their votive offerings, curtains and hangings, embroidered with figures of animals,

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1 "Stipatam multis unam juvat urbibus urbem
Cernere, totque uno compulsa examina voto.
Lucani coeunt populi, coit Appula pubes.
Et Calabri, et cuncti, quos adluit æstus uterque,
Qui læva, et dextra Latium circumsonat unda.
* * * * *
Et qua bis ternas Campania læta per urbes, &c.
Ipsaque cœlestum sacris procerum monumentis
Roma Petro Pauloque potens, rarescere gaudet
Hujus honore diei, portæque ex ore Capenæ
Millia profundens ad amicæ mœnia Nolæ
Dimittet duodena decem per millia denso
Agmine, confertis longe latet Appia turbis." — Carm. iii.

2 "Da currere mollibus undis
Et famulis famulos a puppi suggere ventos." — Carm. i.

3 "Sis bonus o felixque tuis, Dominumque potentem
Exores, ——
Liceat placati munere Christi
Post pelagi fluctus," &c.

4 "Positasque tuorum
Ante tuos vultus, animas vectare paterno
Ne renuas gremio Domini fulgentis ad ora. * * *
Posce ovium grege nos statui, ut sententia summi
Judicis, hoc quoque nos iterum tibi munere donet." — Carm. iii.

BOOK IV.

reference to another state of existence. Though the office of the tutelary being was to avert and mitigate temporal suffering, yet it was still more so to awaken and keep alive the sentiments of the religious being. They were not merely the agents of the divine providential government on earth, but indissolubly connected with the hopes and fears of the future state of existence.

Worship of the Virgin.

The most natural, most beautiful, and most universal, though perhaps the latest developed, of these new forms of Christianity, that which tended to the poetry of the religion, and acted as the conservator of art, particularly of paint-

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silver plates with inscriptions, candles of painted wax, pendent lamps, precious ointments, and dishes of venison and other meats for the banquet. The following characteristic circumstance must not be omitted. The magnificent plans of Paulinus for building the church of St. Felix were interfered with by two wooden cottages, which stood in a field before the front of the building. At midnight a fire broke out in these tenements. The affrighted bishop woke up in trembling apprehension lest the splendid "palace" of the saint should be enveloped in the flames. He entered the church, armed with a piece of the wood of the true cross, and advanced towards the fire. The flames which had resisted all the water thrown upon them, retreated before the sacred wood; and in the morning every thing was found uninjured except these two devoted buildings. The bishop, without scruple, ascribes the fire to St. Felix: —

"Sed et hoc Felicis gratia nobis
Munere consuluit, quod præveniendo laborem
Utilibus flammis, operum compendia nobis
Præstitit." Carm. x.

The peasant, who had dared to prefer his hovel, though the beloved dwelling of his youth, to the house of God or of his saint, seeing one of the buildings thus miraculously in flames, sets fire to the other.

"Et celeri peragit sua damna furore
Dilectasque domos, et inanes planget amores."

Some of the other miracles at the shrine of St. Felix border close on the comic.

CHAP. V.

ing, till at length it became the parent of that refined sense of the beautiful, that which was the inspiration of modern Italy, was the worship of the Virgin. Directly that Christian devotion expanded itself beyond its legitimate objects; as soon as prayers or hymns were addressed to any of those beings who had acquired sanctity from their connection or co-operation with the introduction of Christianity into the world; as soon as the apostles and martyrs had become hallowed in the general sentiment, as more especially the objects of the divine favour and of human gratitude, the virgin mother of the Saviour appeared to possess peculiar claims to the veneration of the Christian world. The worship of the Virgin, like most of the other tenets which grew out of Christianity, originated in the lively fancy and fervent temperament of the East, but was embraced with equal ardour, and retained with passionate constancy, in the West.*

* Irenæus, in whose works are found the earliest of those ardent expressions with regard to the Virgin, which afterwards kindled into adoration, may, in this respect, be considered as Oriental. I allude to his parallel between Eve and the Virgin, in which he seems to assign a mediatorial character to the latter. Iren. iii. 33. v. 19.

The earlier fathers use expressions with regard to the Virgin altogether inconsistent with the reverence of later ages. Tertullian compares her unfavourably with Martha and Mary, and insinuates that she partook of the incredulity of the rest of her own family. "Mater æquè non demonstratur adhæsisse illi, cum Marthæ et Mariæ aliæ in commercio ejus frequentantur. Hoc denique in loco (St. Luc. viii. 20.) apparet incredulitas eorum cum is doceret viam vitæ," &c. De Carne Christi., c. 7. There is a collection of quotations on this subject in Field on the Church, p. 264. *et seq.*

The Collyridians, who offered

BOOK IV.

The higher importance assigned to the female sex by Christianity, than by any other form at least of Oriental religion, powerfully tended to the general adoption of the worship of the Virgin, while that worship reacted on the general estimation of the female sex. Women willingly deified (we cannot use another adequate expression) this perfect representative of their own sex, while the sex was elevated in general sentiment by the influence ascribed to their all-powerful patroness. The ideal of this sacred being was the blending of maternal tenderness with perfect purity — the two attributes of the female character which man, by his nature, seems to hold in the highest admiration and love; and this image constantly presented to the Christian mind, calling forth the gentler emotions, appealing to, and giving, as it were, the divine sanction to, domestic affections, could not be without its influence. It operated equally on the manners, the feelings, and in some respect on the inventive powers of Christianity. The gentleness of the Redeemer's character, the impersonation of the divine mercy in his whole beneficent life, had been in some degree darkened by the fierceness of polemic animosity. The religion had assumed a sternness and severity arising from the mutual and recriminatory condemnations. The opposite

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cakes to the Virgin, were rejected as heretics. Epiph. Hær. lxxviii. lxxix.

The perpetual virginity of Mary was an object of controversy: as might be expected, it was maintained with unshaken confidence by Epiphanius, Ambrose, and Jerome.

CHAP. V.

parties denounced eternal punishments against each other with such indiscriminate energy, that hell had become almost the leading and predominant image in the Christian dispensation. This advancing gloom was perpetually softened; this severity, allayed by the impulse of gentleness and purity, suggested by this new form of worship. It kept in motion that genial under-current of more humane feeling; it diverted and estranged the thought from this harassing strife to calmer and less exciting objects. The dismal and the terrible, which so constantly haunted the imagination, found no place during the contemplation of the Mother and the Child, which, when once it became enshrined in the heart, began to take a visible and external form.* The image arose out of, and derived its sanctity from, the general feeling, which in its turn, especially when, at a later period, real art breathed life into it, strengthened the general feeling to an incalculable degree.

The wider and more general dissemination of the worship of the Virgin belongs to a later period in Christian history.

Thus under her new form was Christianity prepared to enter into the darkening period of Eu-

* At a later period, indeed, even the Virgin became the goddess of war: —

> Ἀεὶ γὰρ οἶδε τὴν φύσιν νικᾶν μόνη,
> Τόκῳ τὸ πρῶτον, καὶ μάχῃ τὸ δεύτερον.

Such are the verses of George of Pisidia, relating a victory over the Avars.

BOOK IV.

ropean history—to fulfil her high office as the great conservative principle of religion, knowledge, humanity, and of the highest degree of civilisation of which the age was capable, during centuries of violence, of ignorance, and of barbarism.

INDEX.

Abgar, or Abgarus, of Edessa, his asserted correspondence, ii. 319.
Ablutions, emblematic, how far consonant to baptism, ii. 3.
Abraham, the Patriarch, i. 58. ii. 231. 421. Race of, i. 252. 267, 268. 298. 412. 446. The Divine promise to, 391. Allusion to Abraham and Sarah, iii. 233.
Abraxas, the mysterious word, ii. 116.
Abstinence, ii. 114.
Abyssinia, Bruce, Salt, and Pearce's account of Christianity in, i. 49. n.
Academy of Athens, philosophy of the, i. 35.
Achaia, Christianity received in, i. 431. ii. 22.
Acts of the African martyrs, ii. 217. n. 252. n.
——, the, see New Testament, and Apostles.
Aderbijan, i. 66.
Adiabeni, Helena, queen of the, i. 62. Her tomb near Jerusalem, 62.
Ædesius, the philosopher, iii. 58.
Ælia, on the site of Jerusalem, Roman regulations at, i. 458. ii. 417.
Ælius, præfect at Carthage, ii. 373.
Aetius, heresy of, iii. 43. 47. n.
Æon, or Emanation, doctrine of an, ii. 102. Christ, 109. 118.
Æon and Protogenes, ii. 83. 98.
Æons, the, of the Gnostics, ii. 83. 111. 120, 121. 130. The primary, 116.
Æsculapius, Temple of, at Ægæ in Cilicia, ii. 417.
Æthiopia, conversion of, ii. 477.
Africa, wild mirth of the native tribes of, i. 11. The granary of Rome, ii. 375. Advance of religion through Egypt to parts of ii. 82. 210. 246—253. Its desolate condition in the time of Augustine, 283.
African Jews, the, i. 397.
——— Christians, ii. 210, *et seq.* 245. 360.
——— martyrs, ii. 216, *et seq.* 244. 246—253.
——— controversy of the Donatists and their opponents, ii. 364, *et seq.*
Agabus, famine predicted by, i. 410. Predicts that Paul would be cast into prison, 432.
Agapæ, iii. 435. 437. n. Suppressed, 439.
Agatho-dæmon, of the Egyptian mythology, ii. 131.
Agenario, called Serapion, i. 41. n.
Agrippa, Herod, ii. 408, 409, 410.
———, the son of Herod Agrippa, educated at Rome, i. 43. 418. Releases Ananias, 436. He sends Paul prisoner to Rome, 440. Edict of, ii. 25.
Ahriman, or Arimanes, of the Persian doctrines, ii. 113. 315, 316.
Alaric captures the city of Rome, iii. 181.
Albinus, procurator of Judæa, i. 323. 441. ii. 40.
———, the Consul, his satire on Constantine, ii. 393. Irritation of the emperor thereat, 399.
Alexander, empire of, i. 1. Policy of, 5. Conquest of Persia by, 61.
———, bishop of Constantinople, ii. 457.
———, a Jew of Ephesus, ii, 30.
———, the coppersmith, ii. 46.
———, patriarch of Alexandria, ii. 433. He expels Arius from the city, 434.

Alexandria, Jews of, their religious and philosophical notions, i. 26. 33. 58. 61. 79. 81. 218. n. 386. 413. ii. 93. 166. Gave birth to two sects of the Gnostics, 115. The Jews of, frequented the theatres, 146. Church of, 208. 428. 433. iii. 10. 26, *et seq.* 381. Dreadful dissension on account of religion at, 2. 9. 27. Murder of George, the Arian bishop of, 93—96. Persecutions by Severus at, ii. 208. [See Athanasius.] Trinitarian controversy, 428. Temple of Serapis at, iii. 150. Worship of, 151. Statue of, 152. The Temple assailed, 156. Insurrection of the Pagans under the philosopher Olympus, 154, *et seq.*

Aliturus, the Jew, ii. 145.

Allegories, superstitious, ii. 99. 106. 119—124. Moral and religious, 238. *et passim.*

Allegory, Scripture, by whom considered a moral, i. 26. 152. Greek mythology also reduced to, 79. iii. 53. Religions when clothed in, i. 119.

Allegorical Being attributed to Wisdom, Mind, Agriculture, &c. &c., ii. 84. Persons and incidents of the Old Testament said to be allegorical, iii. 499.

Altar of the ancient Romans erected in camps, i. 19. Of Incense of the Temple, 157. Of the Unknown God, ii. 17, 18. n. Christian, iii. 505.

Amantius, reasons of his execution, iii. 118.

Ambrose, St., rebukes Theodosius, ii. 466. iii. 165. 169. 171. He flies from Milan, on occasion of the apostasy of Eugenius, 173. Character and fate of, 241, *et seq.* He advocates celibacy, 244. Redemption of captives by, 245. His belief in the miracles performed at Milan, 253. His denial of a church for the use of the heretical empress Justina, 247—250. His embassy to the usurper Maximus, 254. His quarrel with Theodosius, 255. His dignity displayed, and Theodosius condescends to the prelate, 257. He rebukes Theodosius for the massacre at Thessalonica, 258, *et seq.* His death, 262. His works, 311. n. Introduced chanting into the West, 523. The Ambrosial chant, 523.

America, nations of the double continent of, i. 13. n.

America, North, savage aborigines of, i. 11.

Amphitheatres, death of Christians in the, ii. 196. Constantine condemns his enemies to the beasts, 355. n. 390. The Roman Amphitheatre, iii. 455, *et seq.*

Amulets and talismans, ii. 24. 28.

Ananias and Saphira, mysterious and awful death of, i. 393.

———, a leading Christian of Damascus, i. 404.

———, high priest at Jerusalem, i. 419. On acquittal at Rome, he resumes his office, 420. St. Paul boldly confronts, 433. 437.

Andreas, execution of the eunuch, ii. 277.

Andrew, St., the Apostle, i. 159. 189. 225.

Angel of the Synagogue, or chazan, defined, ii. 67.

Angels and Archangels, i. 70. The Angel of the Covenant, 83. Missions of Gabriel to Zachariah, 91. To Elizabeth, 91—94. To the Virgin Mary, 94. 96. To St. Peter in prison, 409, 410. Of the Pool of Bethesda, 215. n.

Angel, the material world created by an, ii. 106. 113.

Angels and devils, later Jewish doctrine of, ii. 101.

———, the seven, of Gnostic heresy, ii. 113. Contest of good and bad, 114.

Anna, prophetical character of, i. 109.

Annas, high priest, i. 285. 334. 392. n. His son Annas, or Ananus, high priest, 441. His sanguinary administration of the Jewish law, 443.

Annunciation, the, of our Lord, i. 94.

Anomeans, the, iii. 44. 47.

Antagonist powers, of creation and destruction, i. 12. ii. 114. Of

light and darkness, ii. 328. *et passim.* See Principles.
Anthemius, the Emperor, iii. 459.
Anthropomorphism of the Greeks, i. 16. 18. ii. 16. Of the Egyptian monks, iii. 309.
Antinous, the quinquennial games in honour of, ii. 153.
Antipater, son of Herod, his intrigues and death, i. 55. 86.
Antioch, Church of, and name of Christians, i. 411. 424. ii. 9. 107. 150. 243. 448. iii. 92. 208, *et seq.* 213. 381. n. Anciently a chief seat of heathenism, 89. Conflagration of the Temple of Apollo, 93. Council of, 9. Monasteries near, 209.
Antioch of Pisidia, i. 423.
Antiochus the Great, i. 60. n.
Antonia, the, or fortress near the Temple, i. 343. *et passim.*
Antonines, the, ii. 136. 139.
Antoninus, Marcus, i. 36. ii. 23. Edict of, 178. Persecution by, 178.
——— Pius, ii. 139. His reign, 156. His rescript, 158. n. His edicts favouring the Christians, 158.
Antoninus, column of, ii. 190.
Antonius, Julius, edict of the proconsul, ii. 25.
Antony, St., a true Christian, iii. 297. Sells his patrimony for purposes of charity, 298. His asceticism, 298. Dæmonology, 299. Self-torture, 301. His influence, 303.
Anulinus, præfect of Africa, ii. 366. 369.
Apocalypse, the, ii. 164.
Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, i. 25. 60. 82. 95. ii. 164. 'Gospel of the Infancy,' i. 133. n.
Apollo, oracle of, at Miletus, ii. 268. 273. 285. Temples of, 344. n. Worship of, 407. iii. 91. 183. Hymn to, 120. Divination, 120. Oracle of, 120. n.
Apollonius of Tyana, i. 120. ii. 98. 124. 230. 237.
Apollos, Christian sectarian, ii. 25. 75.
Apologists, Christian, ii. 154. 162. n. 163. 182. iii. 475. 'Apology' of Christianity, ii. 154. 157. 165. 182. 215. iii. 476.
Appendix I., Recent Lives of Christ, i. 115.
——— II., Origin of the Gospels, i. 124.
——— III., Influence of the more imaginative Incidents of the early evangelic History on the Propagation and Maintenance of the Religion, i. 129.
Appii Forum, ii. 32.
Apostles, twelve, commissioned by Christ, i. 225. Sent to preach throughout Galilee, 238. Their uncertainty, 245. n. Their perplexity, 254. Their contention who should be greatest, 259. 330. Collision of, with the Sadducees, 293. They are empowered to work miracles, 309. Their Divine Master inculcates humility to them, 330. Incredulity of, respecting his Resurrection, 381. Election of a twelfth, 384. The Holy Ghost imparts to them the gift of divers languages for the advancement of Christianity, 385. 387. The Acts and Miracles of the Apostles, 390. 395. n. 415. 422. ii. 7. 14, *et seq.* 26. 41. 96. n. Peter and others accused, i. 393. Defended by Gamaliel, 394. Their temporary protection, 395. 408. At the intercession of Barnabas, they receive Paul into the Christian Church, 407. They preach the Gospel throughout Judæa, 408. Are persecuted by Agrippa, 409. Labours of Paul and Barnabas, 415. 450. Who are invested with the Apostolic mission, 421. 430. ii. 6. n. Martyrdom of some of the, i. 409. 441. The Apostolic history, i. 452. n. 454. ii. 13. 67. iii. 361. n. Argument on the period of Peter and Paul joining the already established Church in Rome, i. 451. n. Martyrdom of Peter and Paul, ii. 42—47. Legends of their missions to divers countries, 61. The primitive Churches collected round an Apostolic teacher, 69, *et seq.* The 'Apostolic Con-

stitutions,' 108. n. Marriage of, iii. 383. Pictures of, 512. Constantine's recognition of, in a vision, 512. Paul and Peter depicted on many old monuments, 512.
Aquila, a friend of St. Paul, i. 430, 431. n. 452. ii. 25.
Arabia, Magi of, i. 112. St. Paul's residence in, 405. n. 406. Jews of, converted, 406.
Aramaic, dialects of the, i. 195. 225. Vernacular in Palestine, 386.
Arbogastes, the Gaul, commander of the Roman troops, iii. 173.
Archelaus, his accession on the death of Herod the Great, i. 86. 114. 136. His deposition, 137. 139. 341.
———, bishop of Cascar, his conference with Mani, ii. 337. His 'Acts,' 327.
Architecture of Grecian temples, ii. 412. 414. Principle of the arch and vault, 412. Of Christian churches, 414. Later Roman, 417. Church, iii. 488. Windows, 489. Subdivisions of the building, 490. Gothic, 491.
Ardeschir Babhegan, king of Persia, ii. 312.
Areopagus at Athens, ii. 15.
Aretas, king of Arabia, i. 145. n. 176. 240. 406.
Arianism, of the Visigoths, ii. 423. n. Disputes on account of, iii. 2—21. 46. 124.
Arians, tenets of this sect, ii. 433. Triumph of the faction, iii. 22. 25. 47.
Arius, doctrine of, ii. 433. Driven from Alexandria, 434. Writes the 'Thalia,' 435. His disciples, 435. n. Is exiled, 444. Recalled by a letter from Constantine, 446. 456. His sudden death, 457. The Arian faction, iii. 22.
Aristides, his apology for Christianity, ii. 154. 189.
Aristobulus, ii. 166. n.
Armenia, iii. 141. Jews of, i. 62. War of Maximin with, ii. 294. The first Christian kingdom, 318.
Armenian Church, the, ii. 81. 316.
Arsaces, dynasty of, ii. 311.
Arsenius, Bishop, false rumour of his death, ii. 452, 453. iii. 302.
Artaces, funeral of King, ii. 321.
Artaxerxes, ii. 316. n.
Articles of the Church of England, i. 79.
Ascension, the, i. 383.
Ascetics, i. 92. 101. 141. Among the Christians, 442. n.
Asceticism, source of, ii. 86—95. iii. 298. Purifying principle of, ii. 114. Of the Christians of Rome, iii. 117.
Asia, rapid fall of the monarchies of, i. 1. Jewish settlements in, 60. 62, n. Religions of, 64. 427.
Asiatic hours of the day, i. 179. n.
——— Jews, the, i. 397. ii. 7. Calamities of, 293.
Asia Minor, Jews resident in all the provinces of, i. 421, 422. Christian churches of, 428. ii. 150, 151. n. St. Paul preaches in the cities of, ii. 24, *et seq.* 40. 42. Office of Asiarch, 29. n. Progress of Christianity in, 80. 158. Orientalism of Western, 92. 168. Persecutions in, 183. 292. *et passim.*
Asmonean dynasty, the, i. 341. See the Herods.
Astarte, worship of, i. 64. ii. 227. iii. 93.
Astral worship, of the East, i. 12. 64.
Astrologers banished by Augustus, i. 43.
Astrology, its character, i. 43. Books of, ii. 130. Predictions of, 176.
Asylum, right of, iii. 222.
Athanasian Christians, the, iii. 29. *et passim.*
Athanasius, St., ii. 444. 449. Charges against him, 450. Appears before the synod of Tyre, 453. He justifies himself, 453. Meets the offended Constantine, 454. New accusations, 454. Banished to Treves, 456. Acquittal of, iii. 2. A prominent character of Christianity, 7. His restoration to Alexandria, 9. He flies to Rome, 11. 14. Is recalled, 17. New charges against, 21. Orders to remove him, 26. Tumults at Alexandria in consequence, 27. Retreat of

this prelate, 30. His writings described, 38. His return from exile, and authority over the Christian church of Alexandria, 96. His fifth exile, 124. His death, 124. Allusions to, 521. *et passim.*

Athens, Jewish proselytes at, i. 429. State of polytheism at, ii. 13. St. Paul in the Areopagus, 15. Philosophy of, 16. 18. The Emperor Hadrian's visit to, 153. Julian at, iii. 62. The Parthenon, i. 26. iii. 161. n.

Attalus, Roman emperor, iii. 181.

———, a Christian martyr, ii. 195.

Augustan Æra, the, i. 1.

Augusti and Cæsars, forming four cotemporary authorities in the Roman empire, ii. 304.

Augustine, St., his works effected a change in human opinion, and influence Christianity, iii. 263. His use of Latin, 263. The Augustinian theology, 264. His style of writing, 271. His civil life, 273. His studies, 274. Impressed with Manichean notions, 274. His celebrity, 275. His baptism, 276. Controversial writings of, 276. The 'City of God,' 277—281. 477. Life of Augustine, 282. The siege of Hippo, 284. His death, 284. Remarks of, 439. 457. *et passim.* His work 'De Civitate Dei,' i. 29. 36. n. De Consensu Evangelist., 128. n. Other writings of, ii. 323. n. 325. n. 335. n. 370. 379. iii. 175. n. 252. n. 286. De Moribus Manichæorum, ii. 336. n.

Augustus, Æra of, i. 1. Sacrifice by Octavius, 27. n. His deification, 29. n. The decree of, 104. Rescript of, in favour of the Jews, ii. 25.

Aurelian, the Emperor, edict of, ii. 176. n. Persecution by, 254, *et seq.*

Aurelius, Marcus, ii. 139. Christianity and the philosopher Aurelius, 159. Persecution by this emperor, 159. 182. Three causes of his hostility to Christianity, 160, *et seq.* 173. His character, 175. His reign, 179.

——— Victor, iii. 106. n.

Baal, the Sun worshipped as, i. 64.

Baalbec, temples of, ii. 412. 417. iii. 149.

Baalpeor, rites of, ii. 225.

Babylas, bishop of Antioch, his martyrdom and relics, ii. 243. iii. 88. n. 92.

Babylon, Jews at, i. 61. 63. n. Controversy respecting [on St. Peter, I. v. 13.], 63. n.

Babylonia, superstitions of, i. 5. 40. 70. Captivity and settlement of Jews in, 61, 62. ii. 312. Caravans from Jerusalem to, i. 111. n. 164.

Bacchus, Temple of, at Alexandria, iii. 153.

Bactria, i. 66. ii. 314.

Baharam, King, ii. 337.

Balk, city of, ii. 313.

Bampton Lectures: — Remarks on Polytheism, by the Rev. H. H. Milman, ii. 6. n. By Mr. Coneybeare, 264. n.

Baptism, rite of, i. 142. 417. ii. 3. 77. iii. 427.

Baptism by Menander, disciple of Simon Magus, ii. 101.

Barabbas, release of, i. 324. 353.

Barbarians, the enemies of the Roman empire termed, ii. 390. Their irruption into the Roman empire, iii. 39. 127.

Bar-cochab, his successes against Hadrian, i. 147. n.

Bardesanes, mystic hymns of, ii. 108. The Poet of the Gnostics, 124. iii. 191.

Bar-Jesus struck with blindness by Paul and Barnabas, i. 422.

Barnabas, of Cyrus, his conversion, i. 407. His conjoint mission with Paul, 415. 422. 424. In company of St. Mark, he quits Paul, 428.

Barrow, Dr. Isaac, ii. 44. n.

Bartholomew, St., the Apostle, i. 160. 226.

Basil, St., interview of Valens with, iii. 125, *et seq.* Orientalism pervades his writings, 187. He was born at Cæsarea in Cappadocia, 193, 194.

Basilides, the Gnostic sectarian, ii. 115.

Basilius, Bishop, iii. 209.

Bath-Kol, or voice from Heaven, i. 306. n.
Beausobre, M., on the Simonians, ii. 98, 99. On Manicheism, 322. n. 332. n. 337. n.
Beauty, allegorical impersonation of of, ii. 99.
Beelzebub, i. 234.
Belgium ravaged by the Catti, ii. 180.
Belief, diversities of, i. 82. *et passim.*
Bentley, Dr., i. 427.
Bernice, wife of Polemo king of Cilicia, i. 425. 440.
Beræa, the Apostles at, ii. 14.
Bertholdt, Professor, Christologia Judæorum of, i. 58. n. His extracts from certain Samaritan letters, 180.
Bethabara and the ford of the river Jordan, i. 141.
Bethany, Jesus at, i. 269. n. 279. 283. 300. 311. n. 331. n. 383.
Beth-esda, Healing of the sick man at the Pool of, i. 215, 216. Judicial investigation into the conduct of Jesus, 217. His defence, 217. His second defence, 218.
Bethlehem, Birth of Christ at, i. 86. iii. 286. The Magi adore the Messiah at, i. 87. 110. The journey to, 103. The birthplace of David, 104. Murder of the Innocents at, 113. Church at, ii. 419. Cell of Jerome at, iii. 322.
——— Gate, the, i. 458.
Bethphage, hamlet of, i. 331. n.
Bethsaida, birthplace of Peter and Andrew, i. 189. 226. 278. The Desart near, 241.
Beugnot, M., his 'Destruction du Paganisme,' ii. 462.
Bible, the:—miracles recorded in the Old Testament, i. 23. Earlier Books of, predict the coming of the Messiah, 58. 105. The Prophets, 58. 75. Targum, comments on Scripture, 60. Mystic interpreters of, 93. n. Astronomical expressions of, 111. n. The Pentateuch, 314. The sublime doctrines of the, ii. 109. Rejected by the Gnostics, 110. With whom the Old Testament predominated over the Gospel, ii. 363. iii. 99. St. Jerome's Latin version of, 288. 336. Language of the Old Testament, 363. 465. n. Its persons and incidents an allegory of the doctrines of the New Testament, 499.
Bingham, Eccles. Antiq., quoted, ii. 414. iii. 369. n.
Bishop, authority of the, ii. 71.
Bishops, presbyter, of the primitive Church, ii. 64. 156. n. Ordination or consecration of, 72. Their attention to secular concerns, 77. Title of pontiff, 78. Growth of the sacerdotal power, 365. 381. 439. iii. 179. 218. 353. 357. 405. Mode of election of, 366. Metropolitan, 367. Formation of the diocese, 367. Chorepiscopi, 368. Archbishops, 369. Patriarchs, 369. Management of the church property intrusted to, 382. The œconomus, 382. Marriage of, 384.
Bithynia, spread of Christianity in, and the neighbouring provinces, ii. 140.
Blandina, torture and martydom of, ii. 196, *et seq.*
Blasphemy, accusations of:—Our Saviour, i. 354. St. Stephen, 397. St. James, 409. n.
Blind, the, restored by Jesus, i. 238. 254. 269. 289.
Boanerges, James and John, named, i. 225.
Bohlen, das Alte Indien, quoted, i. 13. n. 16. n. ii. 81. n. 92. n.
Bona Dea, orgies of the, i. 28.
Bona, Cardinal, iii. 515.
Bonzes, of India, ii. 86.
Bosphorus, the, ii. 402.
Brahma, i. 72. 74. n. ii. 328.
Brahmins, their view of a Deity, i. 15. n. 34. 72. ii. 84.
Britain, vestiges of heathenism in, i. 41. St. Paul's visit to, fabulous, ii. 39. n. The Roman power attacked in, 180.
Brosses, De, theory of Egyptian religion by, i. 16. n.
Brucker, on the faiths of Zoroaster and Mahomet, i. 68. n.
Buddh, allusions to, i. 98. ii. 325.
Buddhism, of the remote East, i. 98. n. 442. n. ii. 85. 323.

Buddhist monks, ii. 87. n.
Burgundians, christianised, iii. 138.
Burton, Dr., i. 109. n. 395. History of the Church by, ii. 156. n.
Byzantium, city of, the modern Constantinople, ii. 399, 400, *et seq.*

Cabala of the Jews, chief origin of the Gnostics, i. 63. A traditionary comment on Scripture, 64. 190. The Adam Cædmon, ii. 324.
Cabalistic Sephiroth, the, ii. 83.
Cabbalism, ii. 27. 112. 116.
Cæcilian, bishop of Carthage, ii. 368, *et seq.*
Cæsar, Caius Julius, i. 43. 120. ii. 21. n.
Cæsarea in Cappadocia, St. Basil the bishop of, iii. 125, *et seq.*
——— Philippi, Jesus near, supposed to be John the Baptist or Elias, i. 254.
———, proconsuls, or Roman governors, resided in, i. 137. 195. n. 420. Paul's imprisonment at, i. 438.
Cæsarius, a magistrate of Antioch, iii. 215, 216.
Cæsars, the, ii. 48. The Imperial history divided into four periods, 49. The Twelve, 165. Prediction relative to, 169.
———, the Two, assisting the emperors in their administration, ii. 304.
Caiaphas, high-priest at Jerusalem, i. 285. 392. n. His acerbity in the interrogatory of Jesus, 334, *et seq.* The defence, 335.
Calendar, religious, of ancient Rome, i. 19. iii. 442.
Caligula, his statue commanded to be placed in the Temple at Jerusalem, i. 62. 408. Persecution by, ii. 38.
Calvary, Mount, its real description, i. 358. n. Church on, ii. 419.
Calvin, doctrine of, iii. 264.
Cana, marriage at, i. 161. The miracle of turning water into wine, considered as anti-Essenian, 161, 162.
Canaanite woman, the, prays Jesus to heal her daughter, i. 251.
Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, i. 401.
Canopus, turned into a city of monks, iii. 160.
Cappadocia, language of, ii. 10.
Capernaum, description of, i. 163. The youth healed by Jesus at, 184. 188. Became the residence of our Saviour, 188. 224. 233. 259. 278. Jesus teaches in the synagogue at, 189. 243.
Cappadocia, Christians of, iii. 125. 193.
Captivity, the Jewish, i. 61—64. The Prince of the Captivity, 95. n. ii. 312.
Caracalla, the Emperor, ii. 200. 205. 225.
Caravans visiting Jerusalem and some Eastern cities, i. 111. n. 164. 287.
Cardwell, Dr., his Essay, ii. 39. n.
Carpocrates and Epiphanes, ii. 130.
Carpocratians, the, ii. 130.
Carthage, city of, ii. 227. Church of, 244. Cyprian suffers martyrdom at, 246—253. The plague at, 249. Dissension and excesses, on the claims of rival prelates of, 364, *et seq.* Council of, 377. 387.
Casius, Mount, iii. 91.
Cassiodorus, i. 107. n.
Cassius, Avidius, victory of, ii. 181. His rebellion, 192. n.
Catacombs of Rome, iii. 500. n. 514.
Catholic faith, edict of Theodosius for the universal acceptance of the, iii. 185.
Catholics, Christian party at Carthage, ii. 367. Or orthodox party of Constantinople, 457. iii. 125. At Alexandria, 28. 37.
———, see Roman Catholics.
Cato of Utica, bequeathed the spirit of liberty to the Romans under the Empire, ii. 55.
Cause, primal, in the Creation, i. 66. 72. ii. 84.
Celestial powers, according to Mani, ii. 330.
Celestial bodies, their offices, according to Mani, ii. 333.
Celibacy, early observance of, i. 162. ii. 87. iii. 292. 320. Laws favourable to, ii. 475. Its influence on civilisation, iii. 127. 224. Of

the clergy, 383. Moral consequences, 389.
Celsus, i. 113.
Cenchrea, vow made at, i. 431. n. A resort of the persecuted Christians, 452.
Centurion's servant healed by Jesus, i. 227.
Ceres and Proserpine, allusion to, i. 13.
Cerinthus, heretic, ii. 62. His tenets, 105.
Chalcedon, Council of the Oak at, iii. 228. 369.
Chaldæa, superstitions of, i. 40. 43. 64. ii. 176. Doctrine of divine energies or intelligences, 83.
Chaldaic tongue, the, i. 386.
——— paraphrast, the, i. 159. n.
Chariot races, in the Circus at Rome, iii. 460.
Charity and Almsgiving, i. 316.
Charity or Christian love, ii. 74. 261. iii. 5. 412. n.
Chiarini, his theory on the chariot of Ezekiel, i. 65. 70. n. His translation of the Talmud, 147. n.
Children, exposed, or sold, ii. 469, 470.
China, religious worship in, i. 15. n. 72. n. 99. n.
Chivalry, an institution springing from Christianity, i. 49. The military Christianity of the Middle Ages, ii. 354. iii. 128.
Chorazin, miracles worked near the town of, i. 278.
Chosroes I., king of Parthia, ii. 319. His assassination, 320.
Christ, Jesus, termed the Father a Spirit, i. 22. 73. The human nature of, 50. Life of our Saviour necessary to a history of Christianity, 52. To write it difficult, 53. General expectation of the Messiah, 56. 145. Jesus, the Light of the world, 69. 98. Birth of Christ, 86. 98. 107. 109. The Annunciation, 94. 96. The Incarnation, 97. The Holy Child, 108. 133. The Circumcision, 109. The flight into Egypt, and return thence, 113. Recent Lives of, see Appendix I., 115. Parables of, 125. The Resurrection of, 131. n. His assumption of public character, 133. Accompanies his parents to the festival at Jerusalem, 134. Visits John on the river Jordan, 149. Is baptized by John, 151. Descent of the Dove on Jesus, 151. The Holy Spirit, 151. His Recognition as the Son of God, 151. The Temptation of Jesus, 152. Opinions of biblical critics on the Temptation, 153. The Messiah, 158. 173. 181. The Lamb of God, 158. The Son of God, 159. 354. First disciples of, 159. His zeal as a Teacher, 160. 171. 185. 190. 199. Our Saviour's miracles, 161. 169. 184. 197. 208. 215. 219. 227. 229. 234. 238. 241. 254. 269. 283. 305. He celebrates the Passover at Jerusalem, 164. Expels the traders from the Temple, 165. 167. 308. Expectations raised thereby, 168. He foretells his own Resurrection, as a rebuilding of the Temple, 169. 254. 362. He teaches the doctrine of Regeneration to Nicodemus, 171—174. He departs from Jerusalem, 175. Baptism by his disciples, compared with the baptism of John, 175. Jesus visits Samaria, 177. Avows himself the Messiah, 178. Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well of Sichem, 179. Is coldly received at Nazareth, 184. Is not considered a prophet in the town of Joseph the carpenter, 185. He discourses on Isaiah, 186. His public declaration of his mission, 189, *et seq.* 194. 219. 255. His teaching differs from that of the Rabbins, 190. Author of a new Revelation, 191. The Sermon on the Mount, 192. 201. Is compared with authors of other Revolutions, 198. 297. Styled 'Son of Man,' 197, 198. 237. Manner of his Discourses, 199. These were not in unison with the age, 201. His conduct with regard to his countrymen, 207. Forgave sins, 209. Is a general theme of admiration, and beloved by the people, 210. 304. Again keeps the Passover

in Jerusalem, 212. Change of the national sentiment as to Jesus, 213, 214. 322. Commencement of public accusations against Jesus, 217, *et seq.* His retirement, 223. Returns to Capernaum, and appoints the twelve Apostles, 224—227. 238. His power exerted in recalling the dead to this world, 229. 238. Compares himself and John the Baptist, 232. Is entertained by a Pharisee, and is anointed from an alabaster box by Mary Magdalen, 233. His conduct towards his relatives, 236. He rebukes the storm, 238. He walks upon the waters, 243. Question of Jesus being the Messiah, 245. n. 264. 280. 290. 314. 412. Public Life of Jesus from the first to the second Passover, 175. Second year of the public life of Jesus, 212. The third year, 247. The last Passover, 287. Concealment of Jesus, 250. 253. 275. Peter recognises him as 'Christ, the Son of the Living God,' 256. The Transfiguration of, 257. He teaches in the Temple, 261. 266. Is denounced by the Sanhedrin, 262. 272. Pharisees perplexed as to the measures against Jesus, 263. His defence before the Sanhedrin, 268. 281. 335, 336. n. The true Shepherd, 275. Visits Jerusalem at the Feast of the Dedication, 279. He asserts his being one with the Father, 281. Caiaphas and the authorities of Jerusalem resolve on putting him to death, 286. Calm demeanour of the Saviour, 300. 330. 333. He enters Jerusalem on the colt of an ass, followed by a rejoicing multitude, 303. 311. n. He declares his approaching death, 307. 317. Causes that prompted the Jews to require it, 322. His betrayal by Judas, 326. 332. His final celebration of the Passover, 329. He institutes the Sacrifice of the Lord's Supper, 329. His prayer to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane, 331. His Agony, 332. Is led prisoner to the house of Annas, 333, *et seq.* And is interrogated by Caiaphas, 335. His arraignment before the Sanhedrin, 335, *et seq.* Question of their jurisdiction in capital charges, 339. His reproof to Peter, 338. No precedent for the trial of Jesus, 342. Motives of the Rulers in carrying Jesus to the tribunal of Pilate, 343. The Roman prefect, and Herod also, declared they found no guilt in Jesus, 351. 354. The Saviour declares, in turn, that Pilate is guiltless of his blood, 356. Insults of the soldiery, 337. The crown of thorns, and mocking of Jesus, 354. The Sanhedrin press the charge of 'blasphemy,' 354. The condemnation of our Saviour, 357. The Crucifixion, 359, *et seq.* The Passion and Agony, 364. Burial of Christ, 366. His Title of King of the Jews, 360. His Resurrection, 376—382. His Ascension, 383. Advent, and second coming of, 391. 454. The only Messiah, 445. The descendants of the brethren of Jesus brought before the tribunals, ii. 57. Their poverty a cause of their release, 58. Mystical doctrine of the Gnostics, and of Jews, relative to the Messiah, 102. Doctrine of the human nature of, 111. Nature of the *Christos*, 112. 122. Gnostic notions of, 118. 123—131. A temple of Venus Aphrodite over the Holy Sepulchre, 417. Helena, mother of Constantine, builds the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and other edifices, 419. The true Cross discovered, 419. Person of the Saviour, 502. Majesty of the hidden divinity, 503. Augustin's description of his beauty, 504. Earliest portraits of, 507. The Father rarely represented, 508.

Christianity, appearance of, i. 3. Its universality, 7. Co-extensive with the Roman Empire, 8. Revolution effected by, 44. Design of this History of, 47. Its influence on civilisation, 47. Different in form at different periods of

civilisation, 49. Gave rise to chivalry, 49. Not self-developed, 50. The Saviour Jesus, 50. Principles of, 50. The Gospels, 50—54. 60. 95. 110. 186. Historical evidence of, 52. Development of, 77. Spirit of the times at the Birth of Christ, 88. 96. The Christian scheme essentially moral, and distinguished from the physical notions of India or China, 98. 148. 422. Propagation and maintenance of, 129—132. 404. 445. The great Day of the Lord, 146. Origin of Monks and Hermits, 162. Principles of Christian morality, 201. Its universality, 205, 206. 319. 413. Was particularly opposed to the doctrine of the Sadducees, 293. Its real design not understood by the Jews, 295. Who among the Hebrew nation likely to embrace, 296. Christ's compendious definition of, 315. Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, 329. The History of Christianity commenced from the Crucifixion, 365—368. The Resurrection of Christ, and promulgation of his religion, 371, *et seq.* Peter invested with the pastoral charge, 382. The religion of Jesus successfully re-instituted by the gift of tongues to the Apostles, 385. Harangues by Peter and the followers of Christ, 387. Converts, at Jerusalem, to the creed of Jesus, 388. Common fund, of the early followers of the Apostles, 389. Doctrine of the Resurrection, 75. 78. 313. 371. 391, 392. Toleration of the Apostles and early Church at Jerusalem, 395. Persecution of Christians in the Holy City, 400. 409. 441. Progress of, in the First Century of the Christian Æra, 411. 445. ii. 48. Church of Antioch assumes the appellation of Christians, i. 411. External conflict of Judaism with, 414. 428. Internal conflict, 414. Not likely long to maintain or suffer the rigid nationality of the Hebrew people, 424. Christians separate from the Jews, 430. 447. 456. 460. Their total independence of Judaism, 432. Effect of the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple, on, 445. Practice of our Lord and the Apostles, 447. How far Judaism was retained by the early Church, 449, *et seq.* ii. 43, 44. 75. Promulgation of the Christian doctrine in Rome, i. 451, *et seq.* At Corinth, ii. 22. *et passim.* In Asia Minor, 40. Its conflict with Judaism, 1.22. *et passim.* iii. 98, *et seq.* And with Paganism, ii. 1. 254. 259. 308. St. Paul a later representative of, 17. 43. His martyrdom, 42. 46. Great revolutions slow and gradual, 48. In the Second Century, 49. Characters of Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines favourable to, 138. The conflict of Oriental worship with, 80. 103. Their combination, 94. Religious sects confused with the ancient religions, 80. Asceticism introduced into, 88. The Gnostics, 95—135. Christianity during the prosperous period of the Roman empire, 136. 140—144. 260. The Christians kept aloof from theatrical amusements, 146. Crisis in the position of the Christians at Rome, 143. 147. 178. 259. Public cry of 'the Christians to the lions,' 154. 175. Insecurity of the Imperial throne favourable to, 200. 263. Peaceful conduct of the Christians, 206. Change in the relation of, to society, under Alexander Severus, 232. Under Maximin, Gordian, Philip, and Decius, 240, *et seq.* Persecuted by Decius, 242, *et seq.* By Valerian, 246—253. By Aurelian, 254. By Dioclesian, 259. Miserable death of the persecutors of, 253, 254. 285. 297. 345, 346. Temporary peace of the Church, 259 The Dioclesian Persecution, 259—281. Dioclesian and Galerius deliberate concerning Christianity, 272. A civil Council summoned, 272. Edicts of persecution, 273. 279. Its triumph by the conversion of Constantine, 308, *et seq.*

340. 381. Different state of the East for the propagation of, 342. And of the West, 343. Civil war of the Donatists and Trinitarians, 364, *et seq.* Doctrines of, 396. 398. Rise of Constantinople favourable to, 401, 402, *et seq.* Legal establishment of, 464. Effects on the religion, 464. And on the civil power, 465. And on society, 468. Its progress towards the conquest of the whole world, iii. 1. Worldly reprisals on religion, 1. Elements of Christianity, 5. In the Dark Ages, 39. In the reign of Julian, 55. Toleration of, by Julian the Apostate, 82. How far he limited his favours to, 82, 83, 84. It predominated in Constantinople and at Antioch, 89. Probable results of Julian's conflict with, 107. Monastic asceticism of, 117. State of, in the East, 124, *et seq.* It mitigated the evils of invasions by Barbarians, 127. Monasteries and hermitages, 128. The Goths, Gepidæ, Vandals, and Burgundians receive, 136. 138. Its triumph and concentration under Theodosius, 140, *et seq.* 462. General effects of Monachism on, 311. 316. 321. Survey of the change effected in, 341, *et seq.* Christians no longer a separate people, 341. Christian writers, 342. Assailed the savage gladiatorial spectacles of Rome, 457. Christian literature, 464. 475. The Ecclesiastical Greek and Latin are new dialects, 465. Church poetry, Latin, 466. Greek, 468. n. Acts of the Martyrs, 469. The Fine Arts, as connected with, 486. Christianity the religion of the Roman world, 525. Christian Theology, 527. Mythic age of Christianity, 531.

Christmas Day, i. 108, *et seq.*

Chronology of the Scriptures, alluded to, i. 106.

——— of the Life of Christ, i. 187. n. 275. n. 301.

——— of early Christian history, how far uncertain, i. 395.

Chronology of the Acts, i. 409. 439. n.

——— of the Epistles, i. 451. n.

Chrysanthius, iii. 58, 59. 79.

Chrysostom, St., writings of, iii. 90. 187. 497. Bishop of Constantinople, 205. 217. Life of, 206. Political difficulties of, 220. Is governed by Serapion, his deacon, 225. Is summoned before the Patriarch of Alexandria, 228. Condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, 228. 230. He quits Constantinople, 231. His return, 232. Second condemnation of, 234. His retreat, 235. 237. His death, 238. His remains transported to Constantinople, 238. Causes of the persecution of, 227. 233, 234. 238.

Church, the heresies in, i. 63. Articles of the, 79. n. The Apostles establish the primitive Christian, or early, 388. The common fund not a community of goods, 389. Toleration of, at Jerusalem, 394, *et seq.* Deacons, instituted, 396. Success of St. Stephen, 397. The first martyr, 397. He proved Christian faith to be triumphant over death, 400. Christians of Damascus, 402. The Apostles at Jerusalem admit Paul of the Christian community, 407. 440. Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, persecutes the Church of Judæa, 409. On the supernatural release of St. Peter, the persecution ceases for a time, 410. Church of Syria, 411. Church of Cyprus, 407. 411. 422. Church of Antioch, 411. 425. 449. Ordination of Elders, 424. Council of Jerusalem [A. D. 49.], 425. The primitive Christians of, 430. The Churches of Asia Minor, 431. 451. ii. 183. The Christian Church of Jerusalem, i. 441. ii. 417, *et seq.* Christians warned to fly from Jerusalem on the approach of Titus, i. 444. Controversy of the primitive, on election and the preservation of Judaic doctrines, 450.

St. Paul establishes the Church of Corinth, ii. 22. 26. Of Ephesus, 25. 64. Church of Rome, i. 430. 451. n. 452, *et seq.* ii. 31, 32. 173. 265. n. Of Carthage and Africa, 210, *et seq.* 244—253. 360. 366, *et seq.* 397. The Christians of the Imperial city quite distinct from the Jews, 35. 53. Persecutions of, at Rome, 35, *et seq.* 52. 159, *et seq.* In Gaul, 193, *et seq.* Constitution of Christian Churches, ii. 48. 63. 265. n. 365. The presbyter bishops, and deacons, 64. The synagogue afforded the model of the Christian Churches, 65. Essential difference betwixt them, 67. The Church formed round an individual apostle or teacher, 69. Oral instruction, 69. Senate of Elders, 70. 72. The Presbyters, expounders of the Christian Law and Doctrines, 73. Ordinary development of a Church, 74. Republican government of, 75. 78. The Christian doctrines, 75. Disseminated throughout all Asia, 81. [Church of Alexandria, see Alexandria.] The Armenian, 81. 316. 318. 321. Church of Smyrna, 184. Of Syria, i. 411. 428. ii. 435. Gnostic notion of *Man* and the *Church*, 120, 121. Of Jesus, the Messiah, 110—131. Persecution by Trajan, 141. By Marcus Aurelius, 159. 175, *et seq.* 182, *et seq.* 193, *et seq.* 201. Under Severus, and Geta, 216—225. Under Dioclesian, 259—281. Christians of Gaul and adjacent territories, 193. Western Churches, 213. Earliest Christian edifices, 232. n. State of, on the accession of Constantine, 281, 282, 283. Cessation of the persecution, 288. Numbers, or census, of Christians, 341. Constantine's Milan Edict grants toleration to, 356. Authorised by law to receive bequests of the pious, 384. iii. 380. Also donations of lands, ii. 389. Mutual accusations by the Athanasians and Arians, iii. 35. Influence of this controversy on Papal power, 40. Arianism triumphant, 42. Edict of Honorius in favour of, 179. Edict of Theodosius for acceptance of the Catholic faith, 185. First persecution by the Christian Church; case of Priscillian accused of heresy, 142. 261. Union of Church and State, 353. 391. Dissensions in, the cause of increase of sacerdotal power, 360. Primacy of Rome, 370. New sacred offices, 372. 'General Councils, 373. Pomp of the prelates, increased, 375. Application of the wealth of, 382. Canons of the, 373. n. 386. n. 387. 390. 407. 421. n. Ecclesiastical courts, 395. 400. Penitential discipline, 401. Excommunication, 404. 407. Ecclesiastical censures, 408. Executed by the state, 408. Civil punishment for ecclesiastical offences, 409. Religious ceremonial, 419. Pulpit eloquence, 482. The service, 520.

Churches, earliest, Christian edifices, ii. 232. n. Demolition of, 279. Church of Nicomedia destroyed by Dioclesian, 274. Restoration of Christian, 298. 300. Destroyed in Persia or Parthia, 316. Restored throughout the empire by Constantine, 357. At Rome, founded by him, 361. Of St. Peter, 43. 361. Of St. Sophia, 404. n. iii. 47. Basilicas or Halls of Justice, more readily adapted for Churches, than were the Pagan temples, ii. 411. 413. At Jerusalem, 419. Of Gold, at Antioch, iii. 9. Many at Rome, were ancient temples, 182. n. The Pantheon, 182. n. Divisions of the Church, 420. The Porch, 421. The Penitents, 421. 423. The Pulpit, 423. Offices and ceremonial, 418. 424. Festivals, 435. The Cross, 496.

Chuza, steward of Herod, i. 377.

Cicero, M. T., philosophy his refuge in adversity, i. 30. n. Moral writings of, 36. 'De Legibus,' 6. 'Hortensius,' iii. 274. Pleasantries of, 37. His sense of religion, 39, 40. n. Cicero, Cæsar, and the emperors, sought and per-

formed the pontifical office, at Rome, ii. 5.
Cilicia, the Gospel preached in, i. 428.
Circumcellions, the, ii. 375, *et seq.* They defeat Ursacius, the Roman general, 376. Their desire of martyrdom, 377.
Circumcision, rite of, i. 109. 416. 418. 425. ii. 3.
Claudius, the Emperor, i. 43. 408. 429. 452. ii. 31. 51.
Classics, the Latin, iii. 463, *et seq.*
Clean and unclean meats, i. 416. ii. 3.
Cleophas and Mary, parents of James, one of the twelve Apostles, i. 226.
Clement of Alexandria, ii. 88. n. 131. n. 264. iii. 383, 384.
Clemens, his epistle to the Corinthians, ii. 76. To the Romans, iii. 364. n.
———, Flavius, put to death by the tyrant Domitian, ii. 60.
Clergy and laity, i. 48. iii. 363. The former an aristocracy, then a monarchy, and despotic, i. 49. Clerical order recognised by the Roman law, ii. 382. Their exemption from civil offices, 383, 384. 389. iii. 82. Their influence, iii. 129, 130. 414. Their interference in secular affairs, 220. Morality of the Roman, 327. Ceremonial of laying on of hands, 354. Not distinguished by dress, 377. Wealth of, 378. Uses to which applied, 378. Dignity and advantages of the clerical station, 413. 535.
Cœnobites, ascetics and monks, ii. 86—95. iii. 305. Dangers of Cœnobitism, 307. Bigotry of, 307.
Coins, Roman; of Constantine, ii. 381. n.
Colossians, the, ii. 41.
Comedy, iii. 448.
Commandments: — the Decalogue, i. 217. 315. Of Jesus, i. 192.
Commodus, the Emperor, ii. 199. 201. His exhibitions and feats in the amphitheatre, 202. Assumed the attributes of Hercules, 201. 203. n.
Constans, reign of, ii. 378. iii. 2. 11. 18.
Constant, M., 'Sur la Religion,' character of that work, i. 10. n. 20. n. 27. n.
Constantia, death of, ii. 446.
Constantine the Great, ii. 49. 278. n. 282. 292. His reign, 303. He preserves the unity of the Roman empire, 306. His religion, 350. His conversion, 308. 389. 396. He commences his struggle for the sole dominion, 344. The Cross appearing in the sky, assures him of conquest, 351, *et seq.* He defeats and dethrones Maxentius, 355. Cruel acts of, 355. 390, 391. 393. iii. 457. His edict from Milan in favour of the Christians, ii. 356. His earlier laws, 358. Summons councils of the churchmen on the dispute at Carthage. 370. 372. Sole emperor, 381. 388. Laws and medals of, 381. 468, 469. His edicts for privileges, &c. to Christians, 389. Presides at the Council of Nice, 390. 397. 441. Execution of Fausta and Crispus, 391. 393. Remorse of the emperor on finding that his son was innocent, 394. 396. 437. Founds Constantinople, 400. His splendour at the dedication of the new capital, 404. 407. His letter of peace to the eastern controvertists, 436. Change in the emperor's opinions, 445. His quarrel with Athanasius, 454. 458. His baptism on his death-bed, 458. Extent to which he showed favour to the Christians, 460. How far he suppressed Paganism, 460, *et seq.* Funeral of the emperor, 476. Accession of the sons of this Christian emperor, iii. 1.
Constantinople founded, ii. 400, *et seq.* A Christian rather than a Pagan city, 402. Its public edifices, 403. Church of St. Sophia, 404. iii. 47. Statues of the old religion set up, ii. 406. Remains of pagan mythology at, 407. Image of Constantine on the porphyry column, as combined with Christ and with the Sun, 408. The Palladium carried from Rome to, 408. The amphitheatre, 410.

Passion for chariot races, 410. The Hippodrome and its factions known by their colours, 410. The churches of, 467. Successors of Constantine, iii. 1, *et seq.* The city remained christian under Julian the Apostate, 89. Gregory, bishop of, 200. Church of St. Anastasia attacked, 201. St. Chrysostom, bishop of, 206—231. Earthquake at, 231. Alarming tumults at, 235. *et passim.*

Constantius, the emperor, ii. 278. His peaceful death, 345.

Constantius, son of Constantine, his reign, iii. 2. Reconciled to Athanasius, 16. Wars of, 18. He abets the Arians, 22, *et seq.* His reception at Rome, 25. His conduct to the disputant sects, 48. And to Julian, 60. His superstition, 61. His death, 64.

Consubstantialism, doctrine of, ii. 443. iii. 9. 87.

Controversies, celebrated, i. 63. n. 75. 124. 450. ii. 364. 422. 428. 438. iii. 13. 22. 40.

Coponius, administration of, i. 177.

Corinth, Christian church of, i. 429, 430. 452. ii. 21, *et seq.* 31. 75.

Cornelius, Roman centurion, baptism of, i. 417. Date of his conversion, 418.

Cornelius, bishop of Rome, letter of, ii. 265.

Council, civil and military, by Diocletian, ii. 272.

Councils of the Christian church in various eras, iii. 373, *et seq.* Of Jerusalem, i. 425. Of Rome, ii. 370. Of Arles, 372. iii. 20. 387. Of Nice, ii. 390. 397. 438. iii. 390. n. Of Antioch, iii. 9. Of Tyre, 9. Of Sardica, 15. Of Philippolis, 16. Of Milan, 16. 20. Of Seleucia, 31. 45. Of Rimini, 31. 45. Of the Oak at Chalcedon, 228. Of Elvira, 358. Of Chalcedon, 369. Of Carthage, 377. n. 387. 440. 443. Of Gangra, 386. n. Of Toledo, 387. 407. Of Trulla, 388. 440. Of Orleans, 440.

Crassus, i. 43.

Creation, theories regarding the, i. 12. ii. 106. 113. 127. Persian system of the, 66. ii. 84.

Creator, the Almighty, i. 319. Gnostic notion of a malignant nature, ii. 426.

Creed, the Christian, iii. 6. Necessity of a, 40. The Apostolic, iii. 268.

Creed, the Nicene, ii. 442. The Arian, iii. 43.

Crescens, cynic philosopher, ii. 183.

Crete, Christianity established in, ii. 39. 41. 64.

Creuzer's Symbolik, translated by M. de Guignaut, i. 10. n.

Crishna, the Indian, i. 99. n.

Crispus, a ruler of the synagogue, converted, i. 430.

Crispus, son of Constantine, ii. 384. Naval victory gained by, 388. Is put to death, 391—393.

Cross of Christ, the, i. 360. iii. 515. Legend of its discovery at Jerusalem, ii. 419. iii. 497.

Cross, the, seen in the heavens by Constantine; disquisition as to, ii. 351, 352. n.

Crucifix, the, iii. 515.

Crucifixion, the, circumstances of, narrated, i. 359, *et seq.* Guilt of the, i. 460.

Cumanus, a Roman præfect over Judæa, i. 419.

Cyaxares I., i. 67.

Cybele, ii. 406. Priests of, ii. 213. iii. 177.

Cynic philosophy, the, ii. 21. n.

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, zeal of, ii. 212. 244. n. iii. 363. n. His martyrdom, ii. 246—253.

Cyprus, island of, Barnabas a native, i. 407. 421. Christian church of, 411. 428. ii. 8.

Cyrenaic Jews, the, i. 386.

Cyrenius, governor of Syria, i. 104. n.

Cyril of Jerusalem, iii. 103.

Cyropædia, the high moral character of, i. 50.

Dæmon, or Demiurge, doctrine of a, ii. 84. 109. 110.

Dæmoniacal or diabolical possession, i. 89. 223. Jesus relieves those afflicted, 234. 238. 251. Opinions thereupon, 234. n.

Dæmonology, iii. 299.
Dæmons, i. 71. 235. n. 238. ii. 267. The Agatho-dæmon, ii. 131.
Damascus, Saul's journey to, i. 402. Christians of, 403. Temple of, iii. 149.
Damasus, pope, iii. 167. 380.
Daniel, the prophet, i. 66. 75. 299. Visions of, i. 71.
Daphne of Antioch, voluptuous rites of, i. 427. Grove of, iii. 89. 91, 92.
Darkness, preternatural, during the crucifixion, i. 363.
Darkness, the realm of, ii. 329. n.
David, the son of, i. 56. n. 59. 78. 95. 102. 159. 295. Royal lineage of, i. 94. 101. 107. Proscribed by Domitian, ii. 57. The Messiah predicted as the son of, i. 315. Who yet confessed him to be his Lord, 316. Prophecies of the Royal Psalmist, 316.
Deacons, institution of, i. 396. ii. 64.
Dead Sea, the, i. 140. 297.
Deaf and dumb cured, i. 253.
Decapolis, district beyond the Jordan, i. 197. 253.
Decius, reign of the Emperor, ii. 225. Persecution of the Christians by, 241, *et seq.* Slain by the Goths, 253.
Decurions of Roman municipalities, ii. 382. 384.
Dedication, Feast of the, i. 276. 277. n. 279. n.
Deity, attributes of the, i. 22. 34. 132. ii. 363. iii. 295. Unity of, 21. 45. ii. 35. 405. Opinions of the ancients on, i. 40. 42. ii. 83. 99. 236. Is removed from connexion with the material world, i. 72. Pure and immaterial, iii. 189. Heretical assertions relative to the, ii. 99. 106. 108. 426.
Delphic tripod, at Constantinople, ii. 407.
Demas, disciple of St. Paul, ii. 42.
Demetrius, exciter of tumult at Ephesus, ii. 29.
Demiurge or Creator, ii. 84. 109. 117, *et seq.* 127. 132. 156. n.
Demophilus, an Arian bishop of Constantinople, iii. 203.
Derbe, town of, Paul and Barnabas preach at, i. 423, 424.
Dervishes, ii. 86.
Desert, the Temptation supposed to be that of Quarantania, i. 156. Jesus feeds the multitude in the, 241. Ascetics and Essenes of the, ii. 93.
Deuteronomy, passages of, expounded, i. 314.
Diagoras of Melos, ii. 20.
Diana of the Ephesians, ii. 29, 30. 103.
Dicæarchus, Macedonian naval commander, i. 6. n.
Dio Chrysostom, oration of, ii. 21.
Dioclesian, the Emperor, ii. 240. Persecution under, 259, *et seq.* His character, 261. His religion, 266. His malady, 269. 280. His abdication, 269. n. 280. 345. His constituting two Augusti and two Cæsars, discussed, 304.
Diogenes and the cynic philosophy, ii. 21.
Dion Cassius, historical details from, ii. 43. 46. 158. n. Fragments of, recovered by M. Mai, 203. n.
Dionysiac mysteries, the, i. 7.
Dionysius, his view of religion, i. 39.
Dioscuri, the, ii. 406.
Disciples, the, of Jesus, i. 159. 164. 175. 189. The twelve, appointed by Jesus as Apostles, 225. The seventy, i. 278. The two, at Emmaus, 380.
Divination, rites of, ii. 359. Suppressed by Constantine, 359. In Italy, iii. 183.
Divorce, among the Jews, i. 104. n. Roman law concerning, i. 473. iii. 398. n.
Docetæ, the, ii. 111. 426.
Domitian, the Emperor, i. 94. ii. 53. Persecution under, ii. 45. n. He annuls the edict against the Christians, 58. His suspicion again excited, 59.
Domitilla, niece of Domitian, banished to Pandataria, ii. 60.
Donatus, a Numidian bishop, ii, 367, *et seq.*
Donatus, a second, anti-bishop of Carthage, ii. 372.
Donatism, controversy of, with the

Trinitarians, ii. 364. A fatal schism, 378. 422.
Donatists, the, ii. 364, *et seq.*
Dorotheus put to death, ii. 177.
Dove, the, descending on Jesus, i. 151, 152.
Druids, the, ii. 39. n. Their inhuman rites proscribed, 343.
Drusilla, espoused by Aziz king of Emesa, i. 425. n. Felix and, ii. 98.
Dryden's line on the savage Man, i. 9.
Du Perron, question of the Zendavesta, &c., i. 68. n.

Earth and Sun, i. 12. Fabulous marriage of the, 13.
Earthquakes, ii. 179. iii. 231.
East, on religions of the, i. 5. 12. 15. 22. 40. 64. 68. 74. 79. 98. 172. 296. 413. ii. 52. 82, *et seq.* 118. 225. 227. 310—318. Persecution of the Christians in the, ii. 178. 207. Marts of the, near to mosques, &c., i. 166. Sepulchres in the, 377. Gnostics of the, ii. 102. 107. Traditions of the, ii. 231. Propagation of the Christian faith in the, ii. 22—64. 81. 316—321. 342. *et passim.* The East still pagan, ii. 381.
Eastern Churches, ii. 389. iii. 124.
Easter, Festival of, ii. 438. Time of observing, iii. 369.
Ebal, Mount, the Law read on, i. 179.
Eden, Garden of, ii. 110.
Edessa, the King of, fable relating to, ii. 108. 319. Temple at, iii. 147.
Education at Rome, iii. 83.
Egeria, ii. 91.
Egypt, worship of Osiris, Isis, &c., i. 13. 41. ii. 51. Theories regarding the political religion of, i. 16. Deity, the worship of the higher class in ancient, 23. Egypto-Jewish theology, 80. ii. 82. 93. Flight of the Holy Family into, i. 113. Monks of, ii. 93. State of, in the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, 149. 152, 153. 155. n. Rebellion of shepherds in, 181. Deserts surrounding, iii. 31. The hermit Antony, 31. Monks and hermits of, 128. 296. 306. The temples of Egyptian worship and idols destroyed, 150—160,
Eichhorn, biblical remarks by, i. 399. n.
Elagabalus, the Emperor, ii. 225. Worshipped, 226. Religious innovations meditated by, 228.
Elders of the Church, ii. 70. Of the Synagogue, 66.
Election, doctrine of, iii. 269.
Eleusinian mysteries, the, ii. 20. iii. 63.
Eleusis, Temple of, iii. 161.
Elias, tradition and expectation of his re-appearance, i. 144. n. 157. 255. 257. 364.
Elijah, the still small voice addressed to, i. 45. His personal re-appearance expected, 92. 144, 146. 157. 364. Reverence for, 143.
Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, i. 93, 94. 101.
Elsley's Annotations on the Gospel, i. 105. n.
Elvira, council of, iii. 358. n. 385.
Elymas, the sorcerer, i. 422. ii. 9.
Elysium, aristocratic, i. 45.
Emanation, doctrine of, ii. 83. 98. 102. 109. 111. 324.
Emmaus, the disciples at, i. 380.
Emblems, Christian, iii. 500.
Emesa, the conical black stone of, ii. 226.
Emile of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, i. 51. n.
Ennius, i. 42.
Ennoia, ii. 119.
Ephraim, tribe of, in Samaria, i. 179. 181.
Ephesus, Temple of, ii. 6. n.
———, Church of, i. 431. 451. n. ii. 26. 41. 55. 64. The city described, 24. The celebrated Temple of Diana at, 24, *et seq.* Collision between Orientalism and Christianity at, 103.
Ephrem, St., the Syrian, iii. 190.
Epictetus, i. 36.
Epicurus, doctrine of, accordant to Greek character, i. 35. Commended by Lucretius, 42. ii. 18. n. The Athenian followers of, 19. The Roman devotees of, 237.
Epiphanius, ii. 328. iii. 474.

Epirus, ii, 41.
Equinox, vernal or autumnal, i. 13.
Erdiviraph, vision of, ii. 314.
Erictho, evoking the dead, i. 43.
Erskine, Mr., on the Zendavesta, i. 68.
Esau, race of, i. 446.
Esdras, Second Book of, i. 82. n. ii. 165.
Essenes, the ascetic sect of, i. 84. 93. 141, 142. 161, 162, 163. 297. 389. ii. 67. n. 86. 88. 92. 114.
Etruscans, the, i. 18. Haruspices of, iii. 105.
Eucharist, the, i. 329, *et seq.* ii. 77. 335. iii. 428.
Eudoxia, the Empress, her character, iii. 227. 230. 233, *et seq.* Her statue, 234.
Eudoxus of Antioch, iii. 45. Bishop of Constantinople, 47. 124.
Euhemerus, his system irreligious, i. 42.
Eugenius, Emperor, iii. 173. His apostasy, 173.
Eumenius, Panegyric of Constantine, by, ii. 344.
Eunomius, iii. 47. n.
Eunuch, the, converted to Christianity, i. 401.
Eunuchs, government of the, iii. 345.
Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, ii. 436. 446. And bishop of Constantinople, 447. iii. 12. 367.
———, bishop of Cæsarea, and historian of the Church, ii. 298. 351, 352. n. 388. 406. 436. 447. His authority referrred to, i. 94. n. 425. n. 442. n. 444. ii. 125. n. 158. n. 244. n. 278. n. 348. n. 475. n. Latin version of, by Rufinus, ii. 341. n. His 'Life of Constantine,' 460.
Eustathius, bishop of Antioch, accused of Sabellianism, ii. 448. His mission to the Iberians, 481.
Eutropius, Proconsul of Asia, accusation against, iii. 121.
———, the eunuch, iii. 222. His life saved by St. Chrysostom, 224. Afterwards beheaded at Chalcedon, 225.
Evangelists, the, i. 51. 53, 54. 60. 95. 105. n. 106. n. 111. n. 143. 152. 279. n. 383. n. Style of the, i. 375. See Appendices to chapter ii. vol. i. at page 115—132. of vol. i. See New Testament.
Evil, principle of, i. 71. 155. ii. 84. Spirits of, ii. 113, 114.
Excommunication, sentences of, ii. 257. iii. 404. 407.
Exodus, passages from the Book of, i. 314. 328. n.
Exorcism, i. 234. By the name of Jesus, 431. ii. 27. The name of God, ii. 27. n.
Exorcists, Jewish, ii. 27, 28.
Ezekiel, chariot of, i. 65. n. On a future state, 75.
——— Tragœdus, ii. 166. n.
Ezra, i. 61.

Fabianus, Bishop of Rome, put to death, ii. 242.
Fabiola, her funeral at Rome, iii. 433.
Fable, succeeded to Nature worship, i. 14. Theogony of the Greek poets, 17. Obscenity of mythological, 18. n. Why embodied in ancient history, 38. Of heathenism, 38.
Fabricius, F. Albert, ii. 353.
Fadus Cuspius, procurator of Judæa, i. 418.
Faith, iii. 532.
———, Expositions of the doctrines of, iii. 475. 478.
Faquirs, ii. 86.
Faustus, quoted by Augustin, ii. 334. iii. 439.
Fatalism, doctrine of, ii. 19.
Fathers, traditions of the, iii. 365.
Fausta, the Empress, put to death by order of Constantine, ii. 391—396. Domus Faustæ, 361. n.
Felix, his character, i. 419. His administration of the Roman province of Judæa, 419. 434. 439. n. St. Paul before, 438. Affair of Drusilla, ii. 98.
———, bishop of Apthunga, ii. 371. 373.
Festivals of ancient Rome, i. 19. iii. 183. Of the Jews, i. 248. 254. 257. 261. 277. n. 279. n. Of the Church, iii. 435.
Festus, Porcius, Roman governor in Judæa, i. 323. St. Paul accused before, 439.

Fetichism, description of, i. 11. 16.
Fig-tree, barren, cursed, i. 307. 309. A type of the Jewish nation, 308.
Figs, species of, i. 307.
Fine arts, the, ii. 486.
Fire, worship and sanctity of, ii. 85. 316.
Fishermen, disciples of Jesus, i. 189. 226.
Fishes, miraculous draught of, i. 189.
Flavianus, bishop of Antioch, iii. 213. 216.
Florus, Roman procurator of Judæa, i. 323. 418. ii. 40.
Fohi, traditions of, i. 99. n.
Fortune of Rome, Temple of the, ii. 347. Fortune, the, of Byzantium, ii. 406.
Franks, the, orthodoxy of, ii. 423. n. Invasion by, iii. 141.
Freewill, doctrine of, iii. 267. 269.
Frumentius, bishop of Acum, his successful mission to the Æthiopians, ii. 479.
Fundanus Minutius, ii. 155.
Future state, a, i. 25. 39. 75. 205. False notions respecting the nature of, i. 313, *et seq.*
Funerals, Christian, iii. 431, 432.
Gabriel, name of, i. 70. Messenger of God, 92.
Gad, the prophet, i. 64.
Galatia, Church of, i, 431. 451. ii. 44.
Galerius Maximus, proconsul ii. 251. 306. n. He condemns Cyprian, 252.
Galerius, Emperor. His reverses in the East, 271. Persecutions by, 272—277. Becomes first emperor, 281. His malady and death, 285, 286. Edict of, 285, *et seq.*
Galileans, the, i. 177. 193. n. Massacre of certain, at the Passover, 248. 290. Their blood shed by Pilate amid the sacrifices in the Temple, 326. They murmur against Jesus, 261. They refuse tribute to Rome, 312. The Apostles were Galileans, and made numberless converts, 385.
Galilee, i. 95. 103. 164. 188. Its population, 195. The Tetrarchate of, i. 114. 195. Jesus made a progress through, 194. Is unmolested, 197. The Apostles return to, 382.
Gallienus restores peace to the Church, and rescinds the edict of Valerian, ii. 254.
Gothic invasion, the, iii. 135.
Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, i. 431. ii. 22, *et seq.*
Gallus, brother of Julian, iii. 56. 61.
Gamaliel, of the Pharisaic seet, defends the Apostles before the Sanhedrin, i. 394.
Games, public, ii. 145. iii. 448. Quinquennial, established at Mantinea, 153. The Secular, 240.
Ganges, the, i. 142. ii. 82.
Gaudentius, Bishop of Rimini, his death, iii. 47.
Gaul, ancient superstitions of, i. 41. Persecution in Southern, ii. 194, *et seq.* Idolatry extirpated in, iii. 161.
Gautama, Somana Codom, and Buddh, i. 98.
Generation, theories of, as to the mundane system, i. 13.
Gennesareth, Lake or Sea of, i. 163. 188. 226. 243. 382.
Genos and Genea, ii. 83.
Gentiles, the, i. 146. 253. 417. 448. ii. 35. Differences between Jew and Gentile partially abrogated by St. Peter, i. 416. Various of the nations embrace Christianity, 423. Their admission into the fold of Christ, by the Apostles, 435. Paul, the Apostle of the, ii. 43.
George of Cappadocia, bishop of Alexandria, iii. 28, *et seq.*
Gepidæ, the, iii. 138.
Gerizim, Mount, in Samaria, i. 177. 182. The Law read on, 179. Worship of the God of Abraham on, 319.
German writers on Christianity, i. 372. n.
Germany, confederacy of its nations against the Roman empire, ii. 181. 190. 390. iii. 141.
Gervaise, St., and Protadeus, the martyrs, iii. 253.
Gesenius, critic and commentator on Isaiah, i. 59. 63. n. On some Samaritan poems, i. 181. n.
Geta, accession of, ii. 217.
Getæ, the, superstitious practices of, ii. 321.

Gethsemane, Garden of, i. 331.
Gibbon, the historian, quoted, i. 39. n. 42. n. 66. 147. n. 363. n. ii. 39. n. 316. n. 379. iii. 101. n. 175. 199.
Gladiatorial shows, iii. 455, *et seq.*
Glaucias, a disciple of St. Peter, ii. 115.
Gnostic doctrines, i. 63. 69. n. 162. n. ii. 83. 323. 426. Christianity of the East, i. 413. ii. 107. Rejection of Scripture by the Gnostics, ii. 110. Gnosticism, its influence on Christianity, ii. 88. 95. 102. Primal deity of, 108. 111. 236. Saturninus, a distinguished head of the later, 112. Various sects of, 114. Allegory of Valentinus, 118—124. Bardesanes the mystical poet of the, 124. Gnosticism had many converts, but was not a popular belief, 132. It was conciliatory towards Paganism, 133. Images, iii. 505, 506.
God, ideas of the Divinity and Creator, i. 14, 15. 23. 34. 45. 51. 218. n. 314. ii. 3. 16, *et seq.* 83. 108. 119. 130. 236. 328. The one God of the Mosaic religion, i. 21, 22. Is Power under the old religion, 22. 173. Love under the new, 22. A Spirit, 22. Is invisible, 25. The divine attributes, i. 25. 46. 72. n. ii. 99. 114. 116 iii. 268. The Father's recognition of Jesus at baptism, i. 151. The Universal Father, 207. 319. 447. ii. 19. Jerusalem, or Sion, his chosen dwelling, i. 443. 447. The name of, having power over spirits, ii. 27. The nature of the Deity, 363. 405. The sect of Patripassians declared that God the Father suffered on the cross, 429.
Gods, Pagan, i. 6. 19, 20. 38, 39. 427. n. ii. 29, 30. 52. 103. 139. 145. 150. n. 168, 169. 192. 227. 230. 291. 406. iii. 53. 65. The idols, shrines, and temples of, destroyed, 144, *et seq.* 166. 173. 182. *et passim.*
Golgotha, the Place of a Skull, i. 359. n.
Good, principle of, i. 76.
Good and evil, ii. 84.
Goodness of divine power, i. 45. 51. 173. 207. 218. 235.
Gorgonius, suffers death at Nicomedia, ii. 277.
Gospel, the, preached to the poor, by Jesus, i. 186. By Paul and Barnabas, 421. By St. John, ii. 103. Harmonies of the, i. 279. *et passim.* The originals or copies, in Hebrew or Aramaic, 459. Pure religion of, ii. 355. 363. See Evangelists, and New Testament.
Gospels, the, embody ideal perfection, i. 51. Harmony of doctrine and facts in, 53. iii. 266. The three first, i. 53. St. John's argumentative, 54. Texts relating to the Messiah, 60. 95. 110, 111. n. On St. Luke's Gospel, 105. n. 106. n. History of the Saviour in, 116—122. Origin of the, 124—129. Their influence on the propagation of Christianity, 129—132. Time of their general reception, ii. 73. iii. 266. Spurious Gospels, 472.
Gothic language, the, iii. 136.
Goths, their invasions of the empire, ii. 253. iii. 137. 181. Early Christianity of the, 135. Arianism of the, 138.
Gradivus or Mars, i. 6. 18.
Grace, doctrine of, iii. 269.
Granianus, Serenus, pro-consul, ii. 155.
Gratian, the Emperor, iii. 163. 165. Is murdered, 168.
Grecian mythology and worship, i. 5. 18. 23. ii. 99. The priesthood less connected with the state than at Rome, 5. Temples, dimensions of celebrated, 412. n.
Greece, names of divinities in, i. 5. Anthropomorphism of, 16. Its religion that of the arts and games, &c., 18. Notions of one Deity secretly entertained by the philosophers of, 23. 456. ii. 17. The Judæo-Grecian system, i. 79. 297. The Jews esteemed most other people to be Greeks, 251. n. 305. Jews resident in, and Christian Church established in, 429. ii. 7. 158. Ascetics unknown to

ancient, 89. Pythagoras, Plato, and the philosophers of, 90. Fictions of, domiciliated in Syria, iii. 89. Temples of, 161.
Greek language, by whom spoken at Jerusalem, i. 386. 407. The Attic dialect, ii. 16. Its degeneracy, iii. 463. Classic authors, 83, 84, 85. Proselytes at Jerusalem, following Jesus, i. 305.
Greek Church, the Christian, i. 113. n. *et passim.*
Gregory the Illuminator, the apostle of Armenia, ii. 319. Is persecuted, 321. Converts Tiridates and his people, 322. Persecution by the Christians in Dara, 322.
Gregory, Bishop of Alexandria, iii. 10.
Gregory of Naziansum, iii. 187. 193. His poems, 197, 198. 388. 468.
Gregory of Nyssa, iii. 187. 193. 294. n. 388. 515.
Gresswell, Mr., i. 105. n. 109. n. 275. n. 395. n. 437. n.
Grotius, works and biblical opinions of this eminent philologist, i. 91. n. 208. n. 265. n. 395. n.
Guizot, M., note on Gibbon, iii. 101.
Gushtap, of Persian mythology, i. 67.
Gymnastic games, iii. 448.

Hadrian, his edict against human sacrifices, i. 27. n. Jewish insurrection against, 63. 147. n. 421. n. ii. 148. The empeor attends to the general concerns of the whole population, 137. His state policy, 139. His reign, 151, *et seq.* His character, 152. His travels and philosophical inquiries, 152. n. At Athens, 153, *et seq.* His conduct towards Christianity, 154. Incapable of understanding it, 155. His letter to Servianus, 155.
Hadrianople, battle of, ii. 388.
Hannah, her thanksgiving, i. 101.
Harmonius, hymns of, enchanted the Syrian Christians, ii. 124.
Heathenism, sybils of, ii. 165. 167. Influence of Christianity on, 234. Change in, 235, 266. Julian's attempt to restore the old religion, ii. 235. iii. 53, *et seq.*
Heathens, superstitions of the, i. 4. 38. 44. ii. 4. Abolished by Theodosius, iii. 143, *et seq.* Babylonian worship, &c., i. 5. 64. Chaldæan, i. 40. Chinese, 15. n. 72. 99. n. Egyptian religion, 5. 16. 23. 41. 80. ii. 51. 116. Grecian mythology, and religious rites and mysteries, i. 5. 16. 23. 42. ii. 4. 14—20. 406. iii. 89. Indian and Oriental, i. 15. 41. 64, 65. 74. n. 79. 98. 142. 172. ii. 83. 85. Ancient Roman, i. 6. 18. 20. 37. 44. ii. 5. 230. 290. 355. High tone of morality of the later Roman, ii. 23. Persian and Magian, i. 15. 22. 40. 65. 68. ii. 81. 83. 85. 113. Phrygian, i. 41. ii. 83. Syrian, i. 64. iii. 89. Mahometanism, i. 68. n.
Hebrew language, the, i. 386. The Psalms, iii. 467.
Hebron, city in the south of Judæa, i. 93. 140. The terebinth tree of Mambre, ii. 421.
Hecate, Temple of, mysteries of, iii. 59.
Heeren, on Egyptian religion, i. 16. n.
Hegesippus, criticism on his narrative as to St. James, i. 442. His authority not to be confided in, ii. 58.
Hegewisch, his work translated by M. Solvet, ii. 49. n. 137. n.
Heinichen, editor of Eusebius, i. 442. ii. 352. n. 440.
Helen, the Spartan, ii. 99.
Helena, queen of the Adiabeni, i. 62.
Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, ii. 394. Her residence at Jerusalem, 418.
———, Simon Magus's beautiful companion, ii. 99.
Helius, minister of Nero, ii. 43.
Hellabichus, iii. 215.
Heresies, various, in the Church, i. 63, 64. 120. ii. 98. 105. 124. 130. 212. 244. 255—258. 268. n. 322. 364. 367. 422. 433—437. iii. 12—37. 43. 185, *et seq.* 188. 373. n. 408. First blood shed on the accusation of heresy, iii. 142. 261.

Hermeneutics, or interpretation of Sacred Writers, iii. 477.
Hermits, ii. 93. iii. 31. Compelled by Valens to join his armies, 128. n.
Hermogenes, heresiarch, ii. 268. n. iii. 493.
Herod the Great, reign of, over Judæa, i. 54. 94. 106. 110. 123. 312. 356. ii. 145. Fate of his sons, i. 55. His disease, 85. His death, 86. ii. 285. His kindred, i. 106. 425. n. His subtle character, 112. 283.
Herod Antipas, i. 114. 145. n. Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, 176. 195. Imprisons John the Baptist for denouncing his marriage with Herodias as incestuous, 176. He dreads an insurrection, 176. n. He puts the Baptist to death, 239. He sends Jesus with insult to Pilate for judgment, 351. His death (A. D. 44.), 395. n.
Herod Agrippa professes the strictest Judaism, i. 408. He puts St. James to death, and imprisons Peter, 409. His sudden death in the fourth year of the Emperor Claudius, 410.
Herod the Irenarch, ii. 185.
Herodians, the, i. 83. 106. 311. 312. n.
Herodias, wife of Herod Philip, incestuous with Herod Antipas, i. 176, 239. The daughter of, 240.
Hieroglyphics, the name of Thoth, i. 74.
Hilarianus, ii. 224.
Hilary of Poictiers, iii. 32. 36. n. 37. n. 42.
Hilary of Phrygia, iii. 120.
Hippocrates, opinion of, i. 234. n.
Hippodrome of Constantinople, ii. 406, 407. 410.
Historians, ancient, i. 38.
History, iii. 474.
History and Fable, old connexion of, i. 38.
Holidays, iii. 442.
Holy Ghost, the, typified by a dove, i. 151. The Comforter, 330. Descent of the, on the day of Pentecost, 385, 387. The gift of, poured out on Gentiles, 417. ii. 26. 27.
Holy Land, the, i. 239, 251. 413. The pilgrimage to, iii. 286. *et passim.*
Homer, fable immortalised by, i. 17. Not allegorical, 17. n. His heroes in Elysium, 45.
Homoousion, the, ii. 443. iii. 9. 37. 46.
Homophorus, mythos of Atlas or, ii. 324. And Splenditenens, 324. 332. n. 334.
Honey, wild, i. 142.
Honorius, the emperor of the West, or of Rome, iii. 177. Laws of, 177. 179. 459.
Horace, i. 42.
Horus, ii. 121, 122.
Hosius, bishop of Cordova, ii. 437. 439. iii. 15. His fall, 25. 42.
Hug, German critic, error of, i. 357. n.
Human nature of Jesus, doctrine of the, ii. 111.
Humanism, doctrine of, ii. 103.
Humanity, laws relating to, i. 469.
Hume, David, i. 12. n.
Hymns, iii. 436. 519. The Latin, 467. Of the primitive churches, 520. Gnostic, 521.
Hymettius accused of malversation, iii. 117.
Hyrcanus, high-priest at Jerusalem, i. 92.

Iamblichus, on the Life of Pythagoras, and on the Mysteries, ii. 238. His wisdom, iii. 79. Suspected of incantations, &c., 121.
Iberians, conversion of the, ii. 480. iii. 141.
Iconium, the people of, expel Paul and Barnabas, i. 423.
Ideler, Handbuch der Chronologie, i. 111.
Iddo, prophet, i. 64.
Idolatry, denunciations of Moses against, iii. 87. Abolished, and the idols destroyed, 150—160. 171.
Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, his epistles, ii. 74. n. 151. iii. 361. Trial of, before Trajan, ii. 151.

Images, the earliest belonging to the Church were Gnostic, iii. 505.
Immolation, human, ii. 321. Of animals, abolished, iii. 143.
Immorality of ancient superstitions, i. 28. 427. ii. 51. Of the Carpocrations, 131.
Immortality of the soul, i. 33. 36. 98. 371. ii. 177. iii. 264. Sentiment of the ancients on the, i. 40. Universal in the sentiment of mankind, 45. Effects of this doctrine, 373.
India, worship of one God by brahmins in, i. 15. 23. Allegory and poetry combined in the religion of, 16. ii. 324. The Ganges and Hindoo ablution, i. 142. ii. 82. 92. The emanation doctrine of, 83. Castes of, 92. Religious system of Zoroaster, 313. [See Zoroaster.] The nearer India, 477.
Innocents, massacre of the, i. 113. 123.
Intelligence, the Divine, ii. 116.
Invocation of dæmons, i. 235. n.
Irenæus, writings of, ii. 39. iii. 370. On Simon Magus, ii. 98. n. On Basilides, 115. n.
Isaiah, the Prophet, i. 59. 81. 92. 144. n. 186.
Isaiæ, Ascensio, an apocryphal book published from the Æthiopic, i. 95. n.
Isis, Temples of, ii. 139. 168.
Isis and Serapis, immoral rites of, i. 7. 41. Osiris and, 12. ii. 7. n.
Israel, Messiah the hope and expectation of, i. 242. n. 304. 411.
Israelites, the, i. 144. 146. 252. 388. 448. ii. 165. The twelve tribes, i. 224.
Italy, rural gods of ancient, i. 18. Legends and festivals of, 21. Pestilence in, ii. 181. Vestiges of heathenism long prevailing in parts of, iii. 183.
Jablonski, the Opuscula of, i. 109. n. ii. 231.
Jaffna, or Jamnia, near Jerusalem, i. 444.
Jairus's daughter, raising of, by Jesus, i. 238.
James, St., disciple of Jesus, and Apostle, i. 189. 225. 407. Called the Just, 443. His martyrdom, 409. 441.
James, Christ's disciple of this name, uncertainly recognised, i. 425. n.
——, son of Cleophas or Alpheus, an Apostle, i. 226. His fate uncertain, but often styled brother of Jesus, 227. 425. n.
Jansenius and the Jansenists, iii. 264.
Jehovah, attributes of, i. 23. 65. ii. 110.
Jeremiah, the Prophet, i. 157. 255.
Jericho, the blind man by the wayside near, i. 289.
Jerome, St., i. 99. n. 225. n. 395. n. iii. 117. 125. 164. 187. 465. n. Life of, 285. 323. Introduces Monachism in the West, 286. Version of Scripture into Latin, 286. 288. He visits Palestine, 287. Trials in his retreat, 324. His return to Rome, 326. His influence over females of Rome, 328. Paula, a disciple of, 330. His controversies, 331. His retreat to Palestine, 332. With Jovinian and Vigilantius, 332.
Jerusalem, city of (See Jews, Temple, and Christ), Jesus celebrates the Passover at, i. 164. The holy city was the stronghold of Jewish enthusiasm, 196. Multitudes repairing to, at the Passover, 287, 288. Jesus enters it in triumph, 302. Its destruction of importance to the progress of the Christian dispensation, 319. Sadness of Jesus on the approaching destruction of the holy city, 317. 320. His distinct and minute prophecy thereof, 325. Tyranny of the Roman procurators, 323. Persecution of the primitive Christian church at, 399, 400, *et seq.* 433. Council of the apostles at, i. 425. The Roman guard, 433, 434. Destruction of the city by Titus, son of Vespasian, 443, 444. Influence of this great calamity on the Jewish nation, 446. ii. 56. Advantageous to the progress of Christianity, i. 444. Destruction of the Jewish polity, 455. The new or [Roman] city interdicted

to the Jews, 459. But Christians permitted in Ælia, 459. Persecution in, ii. 40. Became a Christian city under Constantine, 417. Form of Christianity at, 418. Julian attempts to rebuild the Temple, iii. 99. Supernatural fires destroy the new buildings, 101.
Jesuit missionaries to China, i. 99. n.
Jesus, see Christ.
Jews, the, and Jerusalem : — Religion of Moses and Judaism, i. 21. 41. 102. n. 111. 146, 147. n. 172. 294. 296. 411. 416. Symbolic presence of the Deity, how long preserved under Judaism, 24. The invisible Deity, 24, 25. n. 65. Expansion of Judaism, 25. 411. The Alexandrian doctrine, 26. 33. 58. 60. 79. Not participators in heathen mysteries, 33. Religious parties and enthusiasm of, 55. 311—316. They look to the death of Herod as the time for national independence, 56. Their expectation of a deliverer, 57. 74. 76. 81—85. 87. 155. 243. Foreign connexions of the, 60. Their captivity in Babylonia, 61. 111. Return of, from Babylon, 61. Tide of emigration to Egypt, 61. To Armenia and Asia, 62. Their Monotheism widely disseminated, 62. Schism of Pharisees and Sadducees, 75. Calamities of, 77. The Judæo-Grecian system, 79. 118. The Law, 59. 81. 133. 135. 292. 449. [See Law.] The Hellenist Jews, 82. State of political confusion at Jerusalem, 85. 94. The royal race of David, 94, 95. 316. Their civil institutions, &c., 99. n. 104. n. Decree of Augustus for enrolment or taxation of, 104. Oath of allegiance to Cæsar, or the reigning emperor, 105. 106. 139. The magi in Jerusalem, 87. 110. 112. Jewish fiction relative to the birth of Jesus, 113. n. The festival at Jerusalem, 134. Political revolutions from the Nativity to A. D. 30, 136. The Sanhedrin, 137. 168. 171. 283, &c. See Sanhedrin. The Roman procurators of Judæa, 323. 341. Jews of Arabia, 406. The various races of, 386. *et passim.* The publicans and farmers of taxes, 137. 290. Insurrections of the Jews, 62. 138. 146. 299. 323. 394. 419. 421. n. 434. 443, *et seq.* ii. 148. Against Trajan and Hadrian, 59. Celebration of the Passover, i. 163. Reverence for the Temple, 170. 305. 448. Expectations of the Jews in the Messiah, disappointed, 168. 170. The Jewish leaders hostile to Jesus, 243. The Sanhedrin and the Pharisaic party resolve on active measures against him, 262, *et seq.* 282. 325. The Roman commander of the band of soldiers, 263. 283. 337. 354. 358. 391. The centurion's testimony of Christ, 365. All sects of Jerusalem bitter enemies of Christ, 291. 311. 441. ii. 22. The restrictions of the Mosaic law not offensive to the nation, i. 292. The Jewish Theocracy, 293. 295. 299. 427. *et passim.* Intolerance, tyranny, and strict observances of the old religion, 316. *et passim.* Jesus condemns the bigotry of Jerusalem, 317. The rulers, 298. 303. 309. 323. 325. Christ, the King of the Jews, 304. Ruin of the nation a result of their obstinate fanaticism, 321. 458. Causes of their rejection of Christ, 322. Their persecution and crucifixion of Christ, 333—359. Of the Apostles, 379. 441. Many of the people converted to Christianity by the Apostles, 388. 406. Their separation from the Gentile converts, 449. Caligula persecutes the Jews, 408. Herod Agrippa governs Judæa, 408. Judaism in the first century of the Christian æra, 411. 423. 447. The Roman guard protects St. Paul, 420. Persecutions of the Jewish nation, 429. n. Proselytes to Judaism at Athens, 429. Arts and manufactures of, 430. The Jewish war commenced by Rome, 443. Fall of Jerusalem, 444. The elect people of God, 446. Charac-

teristic distinctions of the Hebrew nation, 448. The Judæo-Christian community sank into obscurity by the preaching of St. Paul, 459. That of Rome led by St. Peter, ii. 43. 55. The foreign Jews not averse to Christianity, 3. Proseucha of, near the banks of rivers, 11. Jewish population in Rome, 35. 37. 51. 55. In the Eastern dominions of Rome, 148. Change in the condition and estimation of the Jewish people after the war against Rome, 56. They every where formed a civil as well as a religious community, 66. Their elders and pastors, 66. Julian a patron of this nation and of Jerusalem, iii. 98, *et seq.* Various allusions to the Mosaic history, ii. 129. The Jews not averse to theatrical amusements, 145. *et passim.*

Joanna, wife of Chuza, i. 377.

John the Baptist, i. 73. Conception and birth of, i. 89. 94. 102. His preaching at Bethabara, the ford of the Jordan, 141. Baptism of, 142. 310. Multitude attending, 143. His denunciations against sins, 145. Duration of his mission, 149. An ascetic or Essene, 141. 161. His language and style of preaching, 147. 149. His avowed inferiority to Jesus, 150. 175. He baptizes Jesus, 151. Deputation from Jerusalem to, 148. 157. He declares himself the harbinger of Jesus, 157. 175. 294. Removes his station to waters near Salim, 175. Close of his career, 175. Imprisoned by Herod Antipas, 177. 230. John's testimony of Jesus the Messiah, 158. 173. 219. His message to Jesus, 229. He is beheaded in prison, 239. His disciples, ii. 25, 26.

John, St., his Gospel argumentative in comparison of the three first, i. 54. 163. 174. 179. n. 212. n. 340. n. ii. 103. The constant companion of Jesus, i. 163. 189. 225. n. 363. Teaches the Christian doctrine to the Ephesians, ii. 55. 103. His death, 61, *et seq.*

John the Solitary, iii. 303.

Jonah, the prophet, iii. 45.

Jonathan, high-priest, assassinated, i. 420.

Jones, Sir William, on the Zendavesta, i. 68. The *Menu* of, ii. 85.

Jordan, the river:—Its valley, or Αὐλων, i. 140. n. Its ford, 141. Baptism of Jesus in, by John the Baptist, 151. Jesus visits the banks of, 279.

Jortin, Dr., on the sermons of Jesus, i. 199. His remarks on ecclesiastical history, ii. 188. n.

Joseph, of the royal race of David, i. 95. Betrothed to Mary, 95. His journey to Bethlehem, 103. His flight into Egypt, 113. His reurn to Galilee, 113.

——— of Arimathea, i. 366.

Josephus, 'History of the Jews,' &c., the more important references and citations, i. 25. 60, 61. 83. 105, 106. n. 120. 149. n. 176. 299. 314. 406. 421. n. 442.

Jovinian, controversy of St. Jerome with, iii. 332.

Judaising and Hellenising Christians, i. 118.

Judaism, i. 21. 41. 102. 111. 146, 147. n. 418. 425. 428. 448. 451, *et seq.* 456. ii. 1. 82. 231. 363. iii. 99.

Judæa, its political state adverse to the new religion, i. 53. Reign of Herod the Great, 54. Roman jealousy excited by the Jewish expectation of a deliverer, 57. Levitical cities of, 93. The Messiah expected as a great king over, 114. 136. 155. Reduced to a Roman province, 137. The Roman tribute, 137. n. Its topography, 156. The Apostles in, 383. Famine in the time of Claudius, 410. 421. Roman præfects govern, 137. 139. 263. 323. 326. 399. n. Succinct account of various of the procurators or præfects of, 418, 419. Authority of the Younger Agrippa in, 440.

Judas, brother of James, also an Apostle, i. 226.

Judas the Gaulonite, or Galilean, i. 138. 204. 249. 297. 312. 394. ii.

39. n. Insurrections by his sons, i. 419.
Judas Iscariot, i. 227. 245. 302. Disquisition on his betrayal of his Master, 326, *et seq.* His remorse and suicide, 344.
Jude, St., brother of our Lord, ii. 58. Trial and release of the grandsons of, 58.
Judgment, day of final, i. 431. n. ii. 37.
Julian, the Emperor, ii. 235. 267. iii. 49. He rules over the whole empire, 50. His character, 51. What called the new religion of, 53. His education, 56. Constantius jealous of this young prince, 57. His acquaintance with the philosophers, 58. At Athens, 62. At Eleusis, 63. Is declared Cæsar, 65. Assumes the title of emperor, 65. His apostasy, 65. Embraces the eclectic paganism of the new Platonic philosophy, 66. Restores the pagan worship. 68. He misapprehended the influence of Christianity, 70. His new priesthood, 72. Charitable institutions, 73. His ritual, 74. Respect for temples, 74. Institutes new sacrifices of animals, 75. His toleration, 80. Sarcastic tone of, 81. He taunts the Christian profession of poverty, 82. Confiscations by, 82. Withdraws the Christian privileges, exemptions, and grants made to them, 82. Education under, 75. 82, 83. Edict of, 84. His endeavour to undermine Christianity, 86. Persecution, 87. The emperor contends on ill-chosen ground, 88. He visits Antioch, 90. He courts the Jews. 98. His attempt to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, baffled by mysterious flames, 99, *et seq.* His writings, 102—104. The emperor marches against Persia, 105. Is slain, 105. His celebrated apostrophe to Jesus of Galilee, 105. The emperor's character, 106.
Jovian, the Emperor, iii. 110.
Jupiter Capitolinus, i. 6. ii. 55.
——— Olympius, ii. 153.
Jupiter Optimus Maximus, ii. 267.
——— Stator, i. 20.
——— Philius, ii. 291. iii. 91.
———, Temples of, ii. 139. 153.
——— Tonans, his statue on the Julian Alps, iii. 173.
Justin Martyr, his 'Apology for Christianity,' ii. 182. His avowal of Christianity and death, 183.
Justina, the Empress, inimical to Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, iii. 246, *et seq.*
Justinian, laws of, iii. 399.
Juvenal on astrology, i. 43. On the Christians of Rome, ii. 38. n.

Karaites, the, a Jewish sect, i. 292.
Kedron, Brook of, i. 331.
Kingdom of Heaven, declarations of the, i. 79. n. 145. 203, 204. 290.
Kingdom of the Messiah, i. 294. 306. 316. 330. 412.
Khosrov I., reign of, ii. 319. Is murdered by Anah, 319, 320.
Klaproth, M., writings of, i. 98. n.
Knowledge, progress of, its influence on religion, i. 26. When beneficial, 27. Prejudicial, 28.

Labarum, the, inquiry as to, ii. 352. *et seq.* 356. 388.
Laberius, mimes of, iii. 451.
Lactantius, appointed preceptor of Crispus, ii. 384.
Lætus, the præfect, ii. 209.
Laity, the, i. 48. ii. 76. iii. 363.
Language, effects of Christianity on, iii. 132. Of the Old Testament, 363.
Languages, various, in use at Jerusalem, i. 386. 433. The Oriental, and even the Latin, in disuse, iii. 39, 40. The Gothic, 136. Greek, 463. Latin, 463.
Laodicea, Church of, ii. 168.
Lapsi, certain fallen Christians denominated the, ii. 243.
Lardner, Dr., i. 105, n. 106. n. 234. n. 442. n. ii. 193. n. 325. n. 328. n. 333. n.
Lateran palace and basilica, ii. 361. The first patrimony of the popes, 361.
Latin became the language of Christian divines, iii. 263.

Law, the Jewish or Mosaic, i. 59. 81. 104. n. 142. 144. 161. 168. 179. 186. 193. 397. 427. n. 433. ii. 1. 68. Relaxation of, i. 342. 'Sons of the Law,' 133. The lawyers, scribes, and rabbis, 190, 191. 292. 449. Causes of their hostility to Jesus, 192. Two witnesses required by the Law, 336. Jews remain strongly attached to the Mosaic, 424. 447. Disquisition on, 447. The lawyers subsequently denominated the wise men, ii. 68.

Laws:—of the Twelve Tables, ii. 359. Of Justinian, iii. 399. Of Constantine, ii. 358. iii. 444. Of Valentinian, 112. 396. n. 458. Of Theodosius, 185. 445. Of Constantius, 397. Of Honorius, 398. n. 459. Edicts of Milan, &c., ii. 356. *et passim.* Of Honorius, iii. 177. 179. Roman jurisprudence, 134. Laws against heretics, 185. The Theodosian code, 342.

Lazarus, i. 301. Raising of, from the grave, 283—285. 303.

Leake, Col. William Martin, illustration of the edict of Dioclesian, by, ii. 263. n.

Lebbeus or Thaddeus, or Judas the brother of James, an Apostle, i. 226.

Le Beau, M., remarks by, ii. 391. n.

Le Clerc, philologist, referred to, i. 103. n.

Legends, Christian, iii. 471. Grecian and Italian mythological, i. 21. 38. 120. Of the missions of the Apostles, ii. 61. Of Abgarus of Edessa, 319. Of Antemius, 352. n.

Legion, the Thundering, miracle of, ii. 175. n. 190.

Lemuria, in honour of Remus, i. 21. n.

Leper, Christ healing the, i. 208. The ten lepers, 294.

Leprosy, outcasts through, i. 208. n. 234. n.

Levitical families, the, i. 89. Cities, i. 93. The high-priests, i. 94.

Libanius, iii. 70. 79. 110. n. 141. 150. 155. n. 206. 458.

Libellatici, who called the, ii. 244.

Liberius, bishop of Rome, iii. 20. An exile in Thrace, 24. Returns to his see, 42.

Libertines, the, or Roman freedmen and their descendants, at Jerusalem, i. 386.

Liberty, principle of, advanced by the establishment of Christianity, ii. 465.

Licinius, the Emperor, ii. 286. 297. 356. His wars with Constantine, 385. Persecution by, 387. His death, 388. 391. His son's death, 393.

Life, doctrine of a future, i. 25. 39. 173. Knowledge of a future state, 75. 205. Blessings and miseries of, 202.

Light, Great Principle of, i. 76. 111. Kingdom of, ii. 315.

Light and Darkness, ii. 84. 324.

Light of Light, ii. 331. The fountain of, 334.

Lightfoot quoted, i. 79. n. 109. n. 331. n. 365. n. ii. 44.

Literature immediately preceding the introduction of Christianity, i. 37. The persecutions for magic, &c. affected the literature of Greece, iii. 123. Influence of Christianity on, 131. And on language, 132. Christian literature, 462. 475.

Loaves and fishes, miracle of the, i. 241. Repetition of the miracle, 254.

Lobeck, the Aglaophamus of, an erudite work, i. 10. n. 13. 17.

Locusts, a food, i. 141.

Logos, the, i. 74. 81. ii. 104. 120. 427.

Lollianus executed for copying a book of magic, iii. 118.

Love, a designation of God, i. 22.

Love of God, and love of man, i. 315.

Lucan, i. 42. n. 63. n.

Lucian, i. 120. 427. n. A satirist of Polytheism, ii. 237. The Philopatris not written by, ii. 432. n.

Lucianus, St., bishop of Antioch, martyrdom of, ii. 289. n. 292. 341.

Lucifer, of Cagliari, iii. 22. 32. 42.

Lucius, bishop of Alexandria, iii. 124.

Lucretius, an admirer of Epicurus, i. 42. ii. 18.
Luke, St., author of the Acts of the Apostles, ii. 41. 98.
Luke, St., Gospel of, i. 105. n. 106. n. 109. 248. 421. n. His Gospel, how altered by Marcion, ii. 129.
Lunacy, dæmoniacs, supposed to be affected by, i. 89. 223. 234. n. 239.
Lupercalia, Festival of the, suppressed, iii. 183.
Lycaonia, province of, barbarous, i. 423.
Lydia, conversion of at Thyatira, ii. 12.
Lydus de Ostentis and the ancient Roman ritual, i. 4. n.
Lyons and Vienne, Christians persecuted at, ii. 193. Church of, 213. n.
Lysias, Roman commander at Jerusalem, i. 434.
Lystra, city of, St. Paul nearly murdered by the people of, i. 424. Paul and Timothy at, 428. ii. 9. 13.

Maccabees, Book of, i. 78. n. 94. 103.
Maccabeus, Judas, i. 279. n.
Macedonia, the Gospel preached by Paul in, i. 429. 432. ii. 31.
Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople, iii. 44.
Macedonians, the, 187.
Macknight, Dr., his remarks, i. 269.
Machærus, fortress of, i. 229. 240. n.
Macrianus, ii. 246.
Mæso-Gothic alphabet, the, iii. 136.
Magdala and Dalmanutha, Jesus visits, i. 254.
Magi, the, i. 15. 40. 65. 68. 71. 111. ii. 311. Their tenets, how far coincident with Scripture, i. 66. They repair to Bethlehem, 87. 110. Summary of the re-establishment of the Magian worship and hierarchy, ii. 310—318. Mani disputes with the Magians, and is flayed alive, 337.
Magic, Oriental, ii. 231. 245. 359. 463. Magicians, i. 416. 422. ii. 7. n. 24. 26. 96, *et seq.* 153. 231. 246. iii. 58. Prosecutions for magic, 112. 114.
Magna Græcia, colonies and republics in Sicily, Italy, &c., ii. 90.
Magnentius, defeated at Mursa, iii. 18, 19. n. The usurper, 21, 22.
Mahomet, religion of, i. 68. n. ii. 81. Tomb of, at Mecca, i. 166. Paradise of, i. 314. Koran of, ii. 231. Monachism, iii. 289.
Mai, Angelo, i. 36. n. ii. 230. n.
Maia, the goddess, i. 99. n.
Majorinus, elected bishop of Carthage, ii. 369, *et seq.*
Malachi, Book of, i. 93. 144.
Malchus, his ear cut off by Peter, and restored and healed by the Saviour, i. 333.
Malefactors, the two, crucified with Jesus, i. 361. The penitent, 361.
Mamertinus, quoted, iii. 89.
Mammæa, the mother of Alexander Severus, ii. 230.
Man a religious being, i. 8. His primæval state, 9. n. Distinct races of, 13. n. Human sacrifices, 27. Doctrine of the two races of, 78. Regenerated man, 172. The human nature, 51. 373. Christianity the moral history of man, 453. Fall of, ii. 110. False notions of the origin of, 113. Gnostic manifestations of Anthropos and Ecclesia, 120. Ideas respecting the first, 324. 329. Man requires authorised interpreters of the mysterious revelations from heaven, iii. 355.
Mani, religion of, ii. 317. 322—337. He is flayed, 337.
Manicheism, details of, ii. 322, *et seq.* iii. 142.
Manes, heresiarch, i. 64. ii. 80.
———, the, and Lemures, i. 21.
Manichæan doctrines, i. 69. n. iii. 142. 268. 274.
Manna, the, i. 242.
Manners and general habits influenced by Christianity, iii. 134. Of the Roman court, 345. Of the aristocracy, 349. Dress of females, 350. Character of Roman women, 329. Manners of ancient Rome, 351.

Manso, on the Augusti and Cæsars, ii. 262. n.
Marcellinus, his narrative respecting the Temple of Jerusalem, iii. 101. 106. n.
Marcellus, fame of the Christian soldier, ii. 337.
————, Pope, in the reign of Maxentius, ii. 348.
———— of Apamea, martyrdom of, iii. 149.
Marcion, Gospel of, by Hahn, i. 162. n. ii. 129. The system of, 125. His severe doctrine, 127. His contrast of the Old and New Testaments, 128.
Marcomanni, war of the, against Rome, ii. 176.
Marcus, bishop of Jerusalem, i. 458.
Marcus Aurelius, the Emperor, ii. 139. 159, 160. 173, *et seq.* 183.
Mardonius, preceptor of Julian the Apostate, iii. 55.
Mark, St., Gospel of, i. 53. 122. 383. n. He is accompanied by Barnabas, 428.
——, bishop of Arethusa, iii. 55. 97. Violent death of, 98.
Mariamne, Asmonean princess, wife of Herod the Great, i. 54. 94. 176.
Marriage, rite of, i. 99. n. 313, 314. n. ii. 325. iii. 292. 385. 389. Laws relative to, ii. 472, 473. iii. 396. Brought under ecclesiastical discipline, 396.
———— Feast, Parable of the, i. 310.
Mars, or the Roman Gradivus, i. 6. 18.
Marsh, Bishop, 'Michaelis of,' i. 124. Some opinions of, 280. n.
Martin, St., of Tours, iii. 161. 261. Ecclesiastical history and life of, by Sulpicius Severus, 464. n.
Martha, sister of Lazarus, i. 276. n. 284. 301.
Martyrs, enumeration of, ii. 193. Worship of the, iii. 433. Festivals in honour of, 435—438. Acts of the, 469. Martyrdom not usually represented in paintings, 513. The Christian: — St. Stephen, i. 397. St. James, 409. 441. St. Peter and St. Paul, ii. 42, *et seq.* In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, 182. Justin Martyr, 183. St. Polycarp, 184, *et seq.* Blandina, 196. Perpetua and Felicitas, 216, *et seq.* Fabianus, 242. Babylas, 243. St. Cyprian, 246—253. St. Lucianus, 289. Marcellus of Apamea, iii. 149. Numidicus, 384. St. Sebastian, 513.
Mary, the Virgin: — the Annunciation to, i. 94. The angel's address to, 96. The Incarnation, 97. Her visit to Elizabeth, 101. The Magnificat, 101. The journey to Bethlehem, 103. Her subsequent residence with Jesus, and parental attention to him, 163. 236. Is recommended by the Saviour to the care of St. John, 363. Allusions to, ii. 405. Personal description of, iii. 509. Oldest known painting of, 510. Hieratic type of, explained, 511.
——, Mother of James and Joses, i. 377.
—— and her sister Martha, i. 276. n. Jesus frequently visited their house, i. 279.
—— Magdalene anoints the feet of Jesus, i. 233. 301. Appearance of Jesus on his resurrection to, 379.
Maternus recommended the spoliation of heathen temples, iii. 87.
Matter, doctrine of the malignant influence of, ii. 84. 99. 109. 127.
Matter, M., opinions of this French writer, ii. 113. n. 116. n.
Matthew, St., Gospel of, i. 53. 111. n. 122. 154. 201. ii. 130.
————, St., or Levi, a publican, collector of tribute. 210. 226. The original Hebrew Gospel of, i. 459.
Maturus, death of, ii. 195. 197.
Maundrell's journey, i. 162. n.
Maxentius, vices of, ii. 282. The Emperor maintains Polytheism, 282. 347. 349. His contest with Constantine, 346. 349.
Maximian, the Emperor, ii. 278. 280. 346.
Maximin, Daias, reign of, ii. 239, *et seq.* 281. 288. 291. 322. His persecution and tyranny, 292, *et seq.* 296. His death, 297. Rescript of, 341.
Maximin, the representative of Valentinian at Rome, iii. 115.

Maximinians, the sect of Donatists called, ii. 379.
Maximus, the usurper, iii. 254. 261, 262.
————, the philosopher, iii. 58. The most eminent in the reign of Julian, 78. His wife sets him an example of taking poison, and dies, 122. He chooses to live, 122. But is executed at Ephesus, 122.
————, the cynic, a rival of Bishop Gregory at Constantinople, iii. 202.
————, Tyrius, i. 18. 30. n.
Mead, Dr., i. 234. n.
Mecca, pilgrimage to, i. 166. 287. The Caaba, i. 206.
Mede, Joseph, opinion of, i. 234. n.
Medes, the, i. 67.
Mediator, doctrine of a, i. 72. 83. 92. 207. ii. 427.
Mediterranean, navigation of, by St. Paul, ii. 32.
Meekness and humility approved of God, i. 203, 204.
Meletians, sect of the, ii. 433.
Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis, ii. 433.
————, bishop of Antioch, iii. 207.
Melita, St. Paul admired as a god in the island of, ii. 32.
Memra, the, or Divine Word, i. 74. 83. n.
Menander, the poet, i. 37. ii. 16. iii. 449.
Menander, disciple and successor of Simon Magus, ii. 101. His disciples, 112. 115.
Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage, ii. 367.
Merobaudes, poem of, iii. 180.
Mesopotamia, Jews in, i. 61. 63. St. Peter's preaching in, 63. State of, ii. 148. 317.
Messiah, the, general expectation of, i. 56. Nature of the belief in the, 58. 74. 76. 180. The expectation national in Palestine, 77. 106. 145. 155. 173. Reign of the, according to the Alexandrian Jews, i. 81. ii. 102. A reformer and king, i. 83. The Prince of Peace, 84. Popular belief of a, 84. Birth of Christ, 87. 98. 107. Jesus designated by John as, 158. 173. 219. 229. The twofold,—the son of Joseph, suffering; and the son of David, triumphant, 159. n. 388. 454. Question, at that time, of Jesus being the Messiah, 244. n. 255. 264. 280. 295. 388. 393. 412. Signs of the coming of, 290. 454. Jesus declares himself to be the, 337. The days of the Messiah begun, 388. Notions of, as promulgated by Marcion, ii. 128.
Michael, the Archangel, i. 70. n. 71.
Michaelis, observations of, i. 145. n. 365. 399. n. ii. 105.
Milan, decree of Constantine, ii. 356, 357. n. Council of, iii. 16. 20. 22. Hilary, Bishop of, 32. 36. n. 42. Christians put to death at, 115. n. St. Ambrose, Bishop of, 241—260. See Ambrose.
Miletus, St. Paul at, ii. 31. 41.
Mill, Mr., History of India by, i. 16. n.
Millennium, the, i. 79. n. 455. ii. 107. 165. Fertility of the earth in the, i. 456. n.
Milton, his poems quoted, i. 81. His Hymn on the Nativity, i. 109. n.
Milvian Bridge, battle of the, ii. 355.
Mimes and pantomimes, iii. 450, 451.
Mind impersonated, Asiatic notions of, ii. 84. Doctrine of purity of, 84. Gnostic idea of a presiding Mind, or self-developed Nous, 116. 119. 120. Moral aberrations of, iii. 5. Imaginative state of the human, 533.
Minerva, ii. 227.
Minucius Felix, ii. 235. iii. 477.
Miracles, recorded in the Old Testament, considerations on the, i. 23. 242. n. ii. 27. Of our Saviour, i. 161. 165. 169. 184. 197. 208. 215. 219. 227. 229. 234. 238. 241. 254. 269. 283. Supposed modern miracles, ii. 175. n. 190. 352, *et seq.* iii. 101. 252.
Mischna, the, a Jewish code, ii. 66.
'Misopogon,' by the Emperor Julian, iii. 104.
Mithra, worship of, ii. 145.
Mithraic rites, the, i. 28. n. 41. ii. 10. 139. iii. 177.
Moloch, worship of, i. 64.

Monachism introduced by St. Jerome in the West, iii. 285. 289. Its origin, 291. Causes which tended to promote, 294. Its effects on Christianity, 311. On political affairs, 312. Its advantages, 314. On the maintenance of Christianity, 316. On the clergy, 319. In promoting celibacy, 320.
Monad, the, of the Carpocratians, ii. 130.
Monasteries, iii. 128. 209.
Monastic institutions, early, i. 161. ii. 86. System, iii. 285. Dangers, 307. Bigotry, 307. Fanaticism, 308. Ignorance, 309.
Monica, mother of St. Augustine, iii. 273. 275.
Monks, origin of, ii. 86—95. Compelled to military service by the emperor Valens, iii. 128. Most active in destroying temples, idols, and vestiges of Paganism, 145. Of Alexandria, 159. Of Canopus, 160. Of Antioch, 215.
Montanists, the, ii. 212.
Montanus, heresy of, ii. 213, *et seq.*
Moon, worshipped as Astarte, &c. i. 64.
Moral element of the ancient Roman religion, i. 20.
Moral government by the Deity, i. 23.
Moral meaning attributed to the Mosaic record by the Alexandrian school, i. 26.
Moral science of Rome, i. 36.
Moral history of man, i. 453.
Moral and temporal character of the Messiah, i. 455.
Moral perfection, ii. 84.
Moral more slow than religious revolution, iii. 4.
Morality, the rise of Christianity effected a revolution in the ancient state of, i. 9. Its ideal perfection found in Christianity, 51. Principles of Christian morality, 201. 227. Its universality, 205. Its original principles, 206. Of heathenism, in the doctrine of Seneca and Marcus Antoninus, ii. 23. Relaxation of Christian morals, 261.
Moriah, Mount, Jewish temple on, i. 78. 179. 319. Heathen temple built on, 458.
Moses, miracles of, i. 242. n. Tradition of his reappearing in the time of the Messiah, i. 257. His Council of Seventy, i. 278. Books of, i. 314.
Mosaic religion, doctrine of Unity, i. 21. The one great God, 22. 293. 411. 416. Certain analogies of, with the doctrines of Zoroaster 66, 69. The Law, 59. 81. 104. n. 142. 192. 204. 292. 397. 403. 447. Commandments, 217. The Law abrogated by the Christian dispensation, and the result of the Gospel doctrine, 416. 425. ii. 1. Its claim to a perpetual authority refuted by St. Paul, 453. Allusions to the Mosaic history, 128. 129.
Mosheim, opinions of, or quotations from, i. 69. n. 70. n. 202. 390. n. ii. 45. n. 63. n. 113. n. 131. n. 155. n. 354. n. 458.
Moyle's works, ii. 175. n.
Mummius, the consul, destroys Corinth, i. 429. n. ii. 21. n.
Municipal institutions promoted by Christianity, iii. 132.
Mursa, battle of, iii. 18.
Music, church, iii. 518.
Mylitta, heathen divinity, i. 64.
Mysteries the last support of Paganism, i. 31. The Eleusinian, 33. ii. 20. Philo asks, if such are useful, why not public? i. 33. n. Iamblichus wrote on the, ii. 238. Osirian, or Bacchic, iii. 153.
Mysticism of the Essenian observances, i. 162. Asiatic, ii. 24. 92. Of the later times of Rome, 237.
Mythology brought on the scene, iii. 452.

Nain, town of, the widow's son raised, i. 229.
Natural Religion, i. 12. 14.
Nature, the goddess Diana an impersonation of, ii. 103. n.
Nature-worship, on, i. 12. Vivifying power of, 13. Ancient symbolic forms of, 31. Taught the Immortality of the Soul, 33. Doctrine of the divine essence 46. Astral worship, a branch of, 64. A pontiff of this superstition visits Rome, ii. 225.
Nathanael, convinced by Jesus, be-

comes his disciple, i. 160. His blameless character, 226.
Nazarenes, the, contemned Jesus of Nazareth, i. 185. He evades their offered violence, 187. The Nazaritish practice of abstinence, 442. n. Christians, by some, called, 457.
Nazareth, town of, i. 95. 103. 140. 184. 187. Jesus teaches in the synagogue at, i. 185, 186.
Nazarites, the, and the ascetics, i. 29.
Neander, the Life of Christ, by, i. 34. 102. n. 105. n. 108. n. 120. 151. n. 235. n. 383. n.
Nebuchadnezzar, conquests of, i. 66. n. 157.
Necessity, doctrine of, ii. 19.
Nehemiah, i. 61.
Nergal-sharezer, the Archimagus, i. 66. n.
Nero, the emperor, i. 439. n. The burning of Rome, ii. 34. 171. n. Persecution by, 42, *et seq.* 45. n. 51. 145. Styled Antichrist in the Sybilline verses, 171. n.
Nerva, the emperor, ii. 61.
Nestorian tenets, i. 99. n. ii. 81. 316. iii. 188.
Neuman, Professor, his translation of Vartan, i. 68. n.
Nice, Council of, ii. 390. 397. 422. 438.
Nicene Creed, the, comparison of Mani's theory with, ii. 325. 331. The Creed, 442. The Homoousion, 443. iii. 9. 201. Opinions, iii. 11. 43.
Nicodemus, his discourse with Jesus, i. 171—174. 213.
Nicolaitans, their opposition to St. John the Evangelist, ii. 105.
Nicomedia, the residence of Diocletian, ii. 264. 304. His edict of persecution executed at, 274. Torn down by a Christian, 275. The palace on fire, 276. Consequences severe on the Christians, 277. Julian at, iii. 57.
Nicopolis, ii. 41.
Niger, Pescennius, ii. 207.
Nile, River, iii. 151. The Nilometer kept in the Temple of Serapis at Alexandria, 151. 158.
Nino converts the Georgians, or Iberians, ii. 480.
Noetus and the Patripassians, ii. 429.
Nous or Mind, the Self-manifested, ii. 119.
Novation heresy, the, ii. 244. n.
Nubia, converts made by Frumentius in, ii. 479.
Numa Pompilius, i. 39.
Numerian, the Emperor, murder of, ii. 268.
Numidicus, martyrdom of, iii. 384.

Odin, Valhalla of, i. 46.
Olives, the Mount of, i. 303. 331.
Olivet, Jesus on Mount, 317. Whence he views Jerusalem and the Temple, 318. The ascension from, 383. Church on the spot, ii. 419.
Olympus, of Alexandria, iii. 154, *et seq.*
————, gods of, ii. 405.
Onager, termed the wild ass, iii. 18.
Onesiphorus of Ephesus, ii. 41.
Ophites, the, or worshippers of the serpent, ii. 131, *et seq.*
Optatus, works of, and important documents appended, ii. 366. n. 374. n.
Oracles, i. 27. n. 41. ii. 164—168. 268. 273. 285. 349. iii. 120. n.
Orations of the Fathers, iii. 484.
Oratory, Christian, and orations, iii. 475. 479.
Orgiasm described, ii. 213.
Oriental literature, i. 10. n. 68. n. 74. n. ii. 310. n. Allegory, i. 152. ii. 84. Asceticism, i. 162. ii. 86—95. 335. Religions, i. 5. 12. 15. 22. 40. 64. 68. 74. 79. 98. 172. 296. 413. ii. 83. 310—317. 222—340. iii. 189.
Orientalism, conflict of Christianity with, ii. 80. 323. 407. Of Western Asia, 92. Tenet of the Great Supreme, 119. 328. Symbolism, 326.
Origen, writings and opinions of, i. 113. n. 151. n. 460. ii. 98. n. 236. iii. 189. Against Celsus, 476. He was subjected to torture, ii. 243. Ormuzd, Oromazd, or Aramazt, worship of, ii. 315. 321. 330.
Orthodoxy, iii. 6. 37. 42. n. 96. 125 143. 205, *et passim.*
Osiris and Isis, mythologic dualism

of, i. 13. Temple of, at Alexandria, iii. 153.
Osius, bishop of Cordova, ii. 373. 437.
Ostrogoths, the, iii. 138.
Ovid, his 'Fasti' embody the religious legends of Ancient Rome, i. 19. n. 21. 142.

Paganism, the older religions than Christianity, i. 4. The Roman Pantheon, 6. Dionysiac, Isiac, and Serapic mysteries pernicious to morality, 7. Dissociating principles of old religions, 9. Creuzer's comprehensive work on, 10. Preparation for a new religion in the heathen world, 24. 413. The mysteries of, 31. Collision with the Gospel doctrines, 423. 427. 431. ii. 1. Universality of, 4. Athens the true seat of, 20. Later condition of, 227. 234. It became serious, 237. 267. Re-organisation of, by Maximin, 290. Fall of, 355. Temples suppressed, 416. 461. The Pagan religion not totally forbidden by Constantine, 462. Re-established by Julian, 235. 267. iii. 49, *et seq.* 65. 68. Its last hope disappointed by the Apostate's death in battle, 105. Lamentation of pagans at his fall, 109. Connection of the arts of magic with, 117. Abolition of, 140. History of Western or Roman, 177. 179. Its extinction, 181, *et seq.*
Pagi, chronology of, ii. 140. n. Observations of, 141. n. 147. n.
Painting connected with Christianity and the Church, iii. 493, 494, *et seq.* 505.
Paintings of the Virgin Mary, iii. 544.
——— of Mani, ii. 326.
——— of Paulinus of Nola, iii. 516.
Palestine:—Religion of the Jews, i. 12. The locality of the Jews, 60. 155. 297. 447. Coin of, 165. Judæo-Christianity of, 413, 459. Situation of, favourable to a new religion, ii. 82. State of, under Trajan, Hadrian, and later emperors, 148, *et seq.* Churches built in, 420.
Paley, Dr., his 'Evidences of Christianity,' &c., referred to, i. 105. n. 234. n.
Palilia, and rural rites of Italy, i. 18. n.
Palladius, præfect of Egypt, iii. 124.
Palmyra, ii. 255. Temples of, iii. 147.
Pantheism of India, defined, i. 65. ii. 83.
Pantheon of Rome, i. 6.
Paphos, city of the island of Cyprus, i. 421. 427. n.
Parables of our Saviour, i. 125. 310.
Paraclete, the, ii. 99. 325.
Parnasim, or pastors, ii. 66.
Parthenon, the, i. 26. iii. 161. n.
Parthia, St. Peter's sojourn in, ii. 311. Power of the kings of, 148. 310. 312.
Parthian war, the, ii. 180. n. 254.
Pasiphilus, torturing of, iii. 121.
Passion, the, i. 364.
Passover, the, i. 136. 163. 212. 247. The last, 287. 260. Particulars of the Feast of the, 329, 330. Custom of releasing one prisoner at, 352. Sacrifice of the great Passover, 433. n.
Patriarchs, beatitude of the, i. 314.
Patrician and Plebeian struggles, i. 30.
Patricius of Lydia, iii. 120.
Patrimony of St. Peter, or possessions of the Roman pontiffs, ii. 361.
Paul, a pharisee and disciple of Gamaliel, i. 394. Born at Tarsus, 401. Persecutes the Church of Christ, 402. His journey to Damascus, 403. 407. His conversion, 395. n. 403. 407. His first visit to Jerusalem, i. 395. n. His privilege of Roman citizenship, 402. Sojourns in Arabia, 403. His high character and eloquence render him the most important auxiliary of the humble Galilean Apostles, 415. 420, 421. In company of Barnabas, he preaches the Gospel in Cyprus, 421. At Perga, 422. At Antioch of Pisidia, 423. At Iconium, 423. At Lystra, 423. At Derbe, 424. Second journey of the Apostle brought him into immediate opposition to Paganism, 427. ii. 10, *et seq.* Admonished by a vision, he visits Macedonia, i. 428. Parting from

Barnabas, he associates Silas in his missionary labours, 428. Gains livelihood as a tent-maker, 430. Third journey of, 431. ii. 24. His miracles, i. 431, *et passim.* His deportment in the Temple at Jerusalem, 433. Charge against him of violating the sanctity of the Temple, 433. Is scourged by Lysias, 435. He claims to be a Roman citizen, 435. Before the Sanhedrin, 435. 437. Before Felix, 438. He preaches the Resurrection, 437. His declaration to Festus that he appealed to Cæsar, 439. He perseveres in this appeal, when before the younger Agrippa, 440. And is sent prisoner to Rome, 440. In what doctrines opposed to St. Peter, 450. Who the adversaries of Paul, 451. 459. To the Corinthians, on meats used in sacrifices, &c., ii. 3. The Apostle, in prison at Philippi, converts the jailer, 13. Is driven out of Thessalonica and Beræa, 14. At Athens he declares the Unknown God of the Greeks to be the God of Abraham, 15—18. He preaches the Resurrection to the Athenians, 19. At Corinth, 22. 70. n. At Ephesus, 24—30. 70. n. The parting of the Christians of Asia Minor with the Apostle, 31. His long and perilous voyage to Rome, 32. Reception of Paul by the Christian Church of Rome, 32. Notices of the Apostle's personal history, 34. 39. 88. n. Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 40. n. His authority not generally recognised by the Church, 75. Martyrdom of, 42, *et seq.* 46. Maxim of, iii. 48.

Paul, an insurgent chief so named, i. 434.

——, a claimant of the see of Constantinople, iii. 12. Conflicts in the capital, 12. Paul expelled, 13. Is deposed, 20. His death, 20.

—— and Macurius defeat the circumcellions at Bagnia, ii. 379.

—— of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, ii. 255. His magnificence, 256. His quarrel with the synod, &c., 257, *et seq.* iii. 521.

Paula, the fervent disciple of St. Jerome, iii. 330.

Paulinus, bishop of Antioch, iii. 44.

—— of Nola, poems of, iii. 440.

Paulus, Professor, i. 115.

Pausanias, his respect for religion, i. 39, 40.

Peace on earth, i. 108. 144. n.

Pearson, Bishop, on the Creed, i. 159. n. His 'Opera Posthuma,' ii. 44. n. iii. 361.

Pelagian heresy, the, iii. 188. 267.

Pelagius, doctrines of, iii. 270.

Pella, town of the Trans-Jordanic province, i. 444. The Judæo-Christian community seeking refuge at, 459.

Penates or household gods of Rome, ii. 4. 403.

Pentecost, Feast of, i. 248. 254. 383. 432.

——, day of, gift of tongues, i. 385.

Peræa, territory of, i. 175. 195.

Perdition, iii. 269.

Perga in Pamphylia, i. 422.

Perpetua and Felicitas, martyrdom of, ii. 216—225.

Persecutions of the early Christian Church, ii. 38. 42. The Neronian, 51. By Trajan, 141. 143. 150. By Marcus Aurelius, 159. 182, *et seq.* At Vienne, 193, *et seq.* By later emperors, 207. 216—225. By Decius, 242. By Valerian, 245, *et seq.* By Aurelian, 254. The tenth, by Dioclesian, 259, *et seq.* By Galerius, 272—285. By Maximin, 291. 366. In Persia and Armenia, 316, 317. In Africa, 246—253. 366.

Persia, traditions of, i. 5. n. 67. The Magi, 15. 40. 65 Immaterial fire worshipped in, 22. The Medo-Persian dynasty, 67. n. A Messiah expected by the Persians, 77. n. The Dualism of, ii. 83. The later Persian kingdom raised on the ruins of the Parthian, 81. Ancient religion of, i. 15. 22. 65. 69. 111. ii. 113. 310. 312. 326. Reign of Ardeschir Babhegan, 312. His edict, 316. Destruction of Christianity in, 316. His acquisition of Armenia, 320. The Persian war, iii. 18. 141. Defeat of Julian, 105.

Pestilence in the reigns of Marcus Aurelius and L. Verus, ii. 180, *et seq.* At Carthage, 249. In the Eastern empire, 295.
Peter, St., local date of the First Epistle of, i. 63. n. The Second Epistle of, 63. n. Simon follows Jesus, 159. 189. Is named by him Peter, 225. He professes faith in Christ, 245. 256. He proposes three tents to Christ, Moses, and Elias, 257. He smites the ear of Malchus, who is healed by Jesus, 333. He thrice denies his captive Master, 338. Peter and John at the Holy Sepulchre, 378. His pastoral charge over the Church of Christ, 382. His speech proclaiming the days of the Messiah, 388. Second speech of the chief of the Apostles, 390. He is seized and carried before the Sanhedrin, 391. 393. He boldly proclaims the crucified Jesus as the Saviour, 393. Is imprisoned, 409. His prison-doors thrown open by an angel, 409, 410. His collision with Simon the magician, 416. ii. 96. His vision of the meats, &c., i. 416. His doctrine latterly exclusive, 449. ; but resisted by the liberal system of Barnabas and Paul, 450. The Petrine or Ultra-Judaic party, ii. 75. Martyrdom of, 42. 361. 'Secret Traditions' of, what termed, 115. The successors of, or popes, iii. 42. n. Church of St. Peter at Rome, ii. 43. 361.
Petra, city of, i. 406.
Petronius, præfect of Judæa, i. 62. 408.
Pharisees, the, i. 75. 105. 107. 138 157. 196. 203. 235. Their inveterate hostility against Jesus, 221. 233. 283. 291. His conversation with, 244. They demand a sign or miracle, 254. This sect constantly baffled by the just replies of Christ, 315, *et passim.* Gamaliel, president of the Sanhedrin, defends St. Peter, 394. The sect take vengeance on St. Stephen, 399. Believed in the resurrection, 437. Pharisaic distinctions and symbols, ii. 4.
'Pharsalia,' the, character of the poem, i. 43. 63.
Pheroras, brother of Herod, i. 105.
Phidias, his Jove, i. 26. His beautiful sculptures, ii. 2. 405.
Philadelphia or Philomelium, Church of, ii. 184.
Philip, brother of Herod the tetrarch, i. 176. 188.
——— II., of Macedonia, i. 6. n.
——— II., of Spain, ii. 285.
——— St., disciple and Apostle, i. 160. 226.
———, the Deacon, converts the eunuch, i. 401.
———, præfect of the East, iii. 19.
Philippi, city of Macedonia, i. 429. St. Paul in prison at, ii. 11. 13. The Philippians, 64.
Philo, doctrines of, and the Alexandrian school, i. 26. 33. 60. 80. 120. 218. n. ii. 117. Historical records by, i. 62. n. 63. n. ii. 93.
Philosophers of the time of Julian, iii. 58, *et seq.* 75. 77, 78.
Philosophical Paganism not popular, 238. 267. Sentiments of the philosophical party, 270. 278.
Philosophy, natural, iii. 537.
———, on ancient, i. 30. A defective substitute for religion, 33. Its exclusive and aristocratic spirit, 34. Varieties of philosophic systems, 35. The Epicurean, 35. The Stoics, 35. The Academics, 35. Fatal to popular religion, 36. 297. Itinerant philosophers and teachers, ii. 7. n. Civil, and not monastic, institutions fostered by the ancient philosophers, 90. Philosophy during the Roman republic, 91. During the Roman empire, 159. 175. 177.
Philostorgius, Fragments of, preserved by Photius, iii. 47. n. 120. n.
Phlegon, celebrated passage of, i. 363. n.
Phœnician cosmogony, the, ii. 83.
Phrygia, Oriental rites of, i. 41. The Gospel preached in Galatia, Mysia, and, 428. 431. ii. 10.
Phrygian Christianity carried into the West, 213.
Pilate, Pontius, Roman governor of Judæa, i. 137. 139. 248. 326. The Prætorium of, 343. 353. His

tribunal, 290. His decision of character, 298. 343. Jesus brought before, 343. Detail of his examination by, 344—350. This præfect proposed to the Jews the release of Jesus, 353. The wife of Pilate intercedes for mercy toward Jesus, 355. Pilate reluctantly delivers Jesus to death, 356. Character of his administration, 399. n. False acts of, ii. 289.
Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, iii. 286, *et seq.*
Plato on the Deity, i. 34. ii. 427. On immortality, i. 40. iii. 67. His philosophic system, i. 79, 80. ii. 17. 90. On the Logos, 427.
Platonism early blended with Judaism, by Aristobulus and Philo, i. 26. n. Brahmin doctrine similar to, 34. Platonic Judaism, 73. 80. Platonic Christianity of Alexandria, 413. ii. 427. Platonic Paganism, 80. 104. 209. 268. The new system of, 237. iii. 66.
Pleroma, the, or fulness of the Godhead, ii. 108. 119. The inviolable circle of the, 120.
Plinius Secundus, his letters to Trajan on the Christians, ii. 140, 141. n. The emperor's reply to his minister, 141. Christians put to death by Pliny, 143. Probable connection of this persecution with the state of the East, 148.
Plutarch, remarkable passage in, i. 37.
Poets, ancient, priests of the mythologic system, i. 13. The heathen religion converted into mere poetry, 26. Poetry ceases to be religious, 42. Poetic age of Greece, 79. Poetry, how far discernible in the Gospel, 131. The Greek philosophical poets, ii. 16. iii. 79. Poetry of the Gnostics, ii. 124. Poetical predictions at Rome, 167. —173. Characteristic difference of Greek and of Christian poetry, iii. 197. In Latin, 466, *et seq.*
Polemical writings, iii. 475. 478.
Pollio, Virgil's, founded on Hebrew prophecy, ii. 166. n.
Polybius, on his use of mythological legends, i. 37. On religion, 38.
Polycarp, martyrdom of, ii. 184.
Polytheism relaxed its influence preparatory to the Christian dispensation, i. 24. Effects of the progress of knowledge on, 26. Decline of, 44. Ceremonies, processions, and spectacles of, ii. 2. 265. It resists the encroachment of the new faith more by popular and political support than by moral and religious influence, 4. Observations on, by the Author of this History, quoted from the Bampton Lectures, 6. n. Contrast of, at Athens, Philippi, and Lystra, 13. At Rome, 138. 145. 237. 267. Restoration of, iii. 68, *et seq.*
Pompey astonished in the Temple at Jerusalem, i. 24. Consults the Chaldæan astrologers, 43.
Pontiff, title of Christian, ii. 78.
Pontiffs, the Patricians of Rome aspired to be, ii. 5. 356. 364.
Pontius, Life of St. Cyprian by, ii. 250. n. 251. n.
Popes, the, grant of the Lateran palace to, by Constantine, ii. 361. Successors of St. Peter, iii. 42. n. See Rome, and Patrimony of St. Peter.
Porphyrius, his Treatise on the Cave of the Nymphs, in the Odyssey, ii. 238.
Porson, Professor, ii. 341.
Pothinus, bishop of Lyons, death of, ii. 196.
Praxiteles, ii. 405.
Præternatural interpositions, belief in, i. 88.
——————— signs in the heavens, ii. 353. 356.
Prætextatus, proconsul of Achaia, iii. 111.
————————, Vettius Agorius, iii. 163. 167. His title of supreme pontiff, 162. His wife also the priestess, 164. His death, 163. funeral and apotheosis of, 164.
Predestination, doctrine of, iii. 269.
Presbyters of the Church, ii. 64. 72. College of, iii. 363. n.
Prescience of God, iii. 268.
Prideaux, Dr., i. 66.
Priesthood, Jewish, deputation of, concerning the pretensions of John the Baptist, i. 148. See High-Priests.
————————, of heathen and pagan

worship, ii. 5, 6. n. 278. 356. 364.
Priests, the High, of the Temple, i. 94. 138. 157. 285. 419. ii. 33. 40. Jesus led before Caiaphas, i. 334. Annas and Caiaphas, 392. Ananias, 419. 437. Jonathan assassinated, 420. 436. Ismaël, 436. The second Annas, 441. The new rabbinical, ii. 67.
Principle, doctrine of an Universal Primary, ii. 85.
Principles, antagonist, of Creation and Destruction, i. 12. ii. 84. Of Light and Darkness, ii. 84. 323. 328. Of Good and Evil, ii. 84. 331. Of Spirit and Matter, ii. 328.
Prisca and Valeria, ii. 260. 277.
Priscilla and Aquila, i. 430. 452.
Priscillian and his followers put to death for heresy, iii. 142. 261.
Priscus, iii. 122.
Pritchard, Dr., on Egyptian mythology, &c., i. 13. n. 14.
Proconsul, Roman dignity of, i. 421. n. How distinguished from the Proprætor, 421. n.
Procopius, rebellion of, iii. 119, *et seq.*
Propertius, i. 40. 44.
Prophecy of the fall of the twelve Cæsars, ii. 166, *et seq.* Of the flight of Nero, 171. Of desolation in Italy on his return, 172.
Prophetesses, &c., ii. 11. 165, *et seq.*
Prophets, the, i. 58. 92. 144. 157. 168. Their blood shed in Jerusalem, i. 316. The false, and enthusiasts, i. 106.
Proselyte of the gate, Cornelius, i. 417. n.
Proselytes, Jewish, in Greece, &c., i. 429. ii. 9. The Gentile, 450. ii. 65.
Proselytes of the gate, i. 416. 427. Gentile, 427. 450.
Providence: — See God. The designs of, i. 453. Hand of, ii. 253.
Prudentius, iii. 106. n. Poems of, 178. 180. 431, 432. 456. Hymn, 423. n. His style, 464.
Psalms, the, iii. 519. How repeated, 521.
Psalter, the, iii. 519.
Ptolemais, Church of, ii. 435. n. iii. 407.
Publicans, the, of the New Testament history, i. 209. 290.
Purification, rite of, i. 109. Doctrine of, ii. 118.
Pythagoras, doctrines of, derived from the East, i. 80. ii. 90. 238.
Python, the mythic, ii. 407.

Quadratus, Apology of, ii. 153. n. 154.
Quarantania, Desert of, i. 156.

Rabbis, the, propounders of the Law, i. 190. 193.
Rabbinical writings, i. 143. 182. 265. Notions of a future state, i. 313. Tradition, i. 339. 449.
Rabbins, the, i. 181. 190. 264. 456. n. ii. 3. iii. 365.
Raoul Rochette, M., Essays of, iii. 433. n. 437. n.
Rask, Professor, i. 69.
Redeemer, the, i. 92. 124. n. 290. 458. Psalms of David prophetic of, i. 316. Doctrine of a, iii. 268. Gnostic notion of a, ii. 127.
Regeneration, doctrine of, i. 172.
Religion, the rites of genuine, not a matter of state policy, i. 37. It required to be clothed with authority, or could not have subsisted, iii. 131. Religious impressions, 536.
Religion, Christian, see Christ, Christianity, Church.
Religions: — of Egypt, i. 5. 16. 23. 41. 80. ii. 51. 116. Of Babylon, i. 5. 64. Of China, i. 15. n. 72. n. Of Greece, i. 5. 16. 23. 42. ii. 4. 14—20. Of ancient Rome, i. 6—21. 29. ii. 5. 291. iii. 162. 166. Of Persia, i. 15. 22. 65. 69. 111. ii. 113. 310. Of India, i. 15. 23. 65. 74. 98. 142. Of the Jews, i. 21. 41. 64. 102. n. 111. 146, 147. n. 172. 294. 296. 411. 416. [See Law, and Mosaic Religion.] Pagan, i. 4. 6. 9. 24. 31. 431, *et passim.* ii. 1. Its fall, ii. 355. Abolished, iii. 140, *et seq.* Of Mahomet, i. 68. n. Of Syria, i. 64. 427. See Christianity.
Repentance essential to religion, ii. 19. 336.
Resurrection, doctrine of the, i. 75. 78. 313. 391. ii. 19. Of Jesus, foretold by himself, i. 169. The Resurrection of Christ, 371, *et seq.*

411. Is the basis of religion, 371. The Sadducees denied it, 392.
Retribution, future, i. 25. ii. 19. iii. 264.
Revelation, Jesus promulgates a new, i. 191. Rhetoric, iii. 480.
Rimini, council of, iii. 45.
Rites of superstition, the immoral, chiefly Oriental, i. 28. n. 427. ii. 51. 131.
Roman Catholics charged with the gunpowder plot, and the fire of London, ii. 45. n.
Rome, reign of Augustus Cæsar, i. 1. Civilisation of, 2. Worship of Jupiter Capitolinus, 6. Religious mystery, 6. Book of Laws, 6. The Romans rejected the obscene fables of the Greek superstition, 18. n. Priests, augurs, and aruspices of, 19. Deities of, allegorical, 19. Moral element of the religion of, 20. Sanguinary spectacles of, 27. n. Roman pride supported heathen worship, 29. Its philosophy similar to that of the Stoics, 35. The Haruspices, 37. Reception of foreign religions in, 40. Christianity gradually subverts the Imperial government of, 48. Controversy on the question as to *Rome* or *Babylon*, (First Epistle of St. Peter, v. 13.) 63. n. ii. 37. Fable of Lupa (Romulus and Remus), i. 100. Laws of, 142. Dominion over the Jewish nation, 298. 312. 323. 341. 418. 434. The Jews incur the vengeance of, 321, *et seq.* 408. 419. Spread of Christianity throughout the empire, 411. Proconsuls and proprætors, i. 421. n. The Christian Church at, whether founded by the Apostles, 430. 451. n. St. Paul at, 440. Rights of citizenship of, 439. Details of the Jewish war, and destruction of Jerusalem, 443. Roman converts to Christianity, 452, *et seq.* Both Jews and Christians driven from the Imperial city, 452. ii. 31. Paganism an integral part of state politics at, 5. The heathen pontiffs, 5. 356. Innovations hostile to the state religion, considered as treason against the majesty of Rome, 5. Roman population of Corinth, 21. 31. St. Paul's voyage, and arrival in, 32, *et seq.* Burning of, in the reign of Nero, 34. 45. n. 51. 53. Jewish population of, 35. 37. Persecutions of Christians at, 42. 141. Fame of St. Peter in the Western Church, 43. Imperial history of, divided into four periods, 49. To the death of Nero, 50. To the accession of Trajan, 53. The third period, 139—199. The fourth period, 199, *et seq.* Reign of Trajan, 49. 59. 136. 139. 141. Tyranny and vices of Domitian, 54. Spirit of ancient liberty more suspected by Vespasian than the new creed, 55. No ascetic or cenobitic institutions appertaining to ancient Rome, 89. 91. The emperors at the commencement of the second century, 136. Extent of the empire, 136. Christians persecuted by Trajan, 141. By Marcus Aurelius, 159. State of the eastern dominions of Rome, 148. 292—297. Connection of Christianity with the fall of the Roman Empire, 163. Prediction of the fall of, 169. Change in the circumstances of the times, respecting Christianity, 173. State of peace, 173. Terror of the Roman world, 174. The Christians reckoned the cause of approaching calamities, 175. Earthquakes and calamities, 179, 180, *et seq.* Pestilence, 180. 295. Rapid succession of emperors of, 199, *et seq.* 240. The Palladium, 227. 408. Decius persecutes the Christians, 241, *et seq.* Reign of Dioclesian, 259, *et seq.* Change in the state of the empire, 262. 303. 308. Citizenship, 263. n. 304. Taxation, 263. n. Neglect of Rome by the later emperors, 263. General misery, 281. Persecution by Maximin, 291. Pagans boast of the flourishing state of the East, 292. Calamities and famine of the eastern empire, 293, 294. Pestilence, 295. Reign of Constantine, 303. Degradation of the ancient capital, 303. Unity of the empire preserved, 305, 306.

A new capital established at Byzantium, 306. A new nobility succeeds the Patricians, 307. Finance and jurisprudence, 307. Tumult of the Christians against the tyranny of Maxentius, 348. The pope, Marcellus, degraded by him, 348. Victory of Constantine over Maxentius, 355. Fall of Paganism, 355.
Rome, Revolution effected by Constantine the Great at, ii. 356. 360, *et seq.* 381. Patrimony of the popes, 361. Council of Rome, 370. Seat of empire transferred to Byzantium or Constantinople, 399. Senate of Rome, 400. iii. 167. Constantinople a counterpart of, ii. 403. Julius, bishop of, iii. 14. 42. n. Synod at, 15. Liberius, bishop of, 21. 42. Is banished, 24. Felix, bishop of, 24. 43. Irruption of barbarians into the empire, 39. Influence of the Athanasian controversy on the growth of papal power, 40. Trials in, before Maximin, 115. The empire invaded or menaced by Persians, Huns, Goths, and Franks, on its frontiers of the Euphrates, Danube, and Rhine ,141. Paganism at, 162, *et seq.* The Capitol, 162. Damasus, bishop of, 167. The heathen sacerdotal property confiscated, 168. Personification of Rome, by Symmachus, 170. Taken by Alaric, 181. The Roman Empire under Christianity, 341. The Christian emperors, 846. The aristocracy of, 348. Their manners, 349. Gradual development of the hierarchical power, 353. 357. Primacy of Rome asserted, 367. 370. n. The capital of Christendom, 370. The Roman law, 397. Classical, and also ecclesiastical poetry, 466, *et seq.* Catacombs of, 500. n. 514. Approaching ruin of the empire, 525.
Rosenmüller, on Isaiah, &c., i. 59. 99. n. 158. n. ii. 17. n.
Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, i. 9. 51. n.
Routh, Dr., ii. 341.
Rustan, fabulous hero of Persia, ii. 315.
Rusticus, the prefect. ii. 183.
Sabbath, the, reading of the Law, on, i. 186. n. Jesus taught on the, 190. Alleged breach of, by our Saviour, 214. New charges on this point, 221. 272. Jewish observance of, 215. Manichean observance of, ii. 335.
Sabellianism, its nature, ii. 429, *et seq.*
Sabinus, Flavius, put to death by Domitian, ii. 59.
Sacraments, secrecy of the, iii. 425. Baptism, 427. The Lord's Supper, 428.
Sacrifice, the Christians put to the test of offering heathen, ii. 220. 251. 277. 279. Constantine said, by Theodoret, to have prohibited pagan sacrifices, 460. 463. Theodosius abolishes all heathen sacrifices, iii. 143.
Sacrifices, human, i. 27. iii. 19. n. 143. Of sheep, doves, &c., in the Temple, i. 165.
Sacy, M. Silvestre de, i. 78. n.
Sadder, the, translated by Hyde, i. 68. n.
Sadducees, tenets of the, i. 75. 139. 202. 292. 311. 313. 437. The Sadducaic party become predominant in the Sanhedrin, i. 392.
Saints and images, worship of, iii. 539. 541.
——, Lives of the, iii. 473.
Salamis, in Cyprus, St. Paul at, i. 421.
Salim, town of Peræa, i. 175.
Sallust, the Præfect, iii. 93. 98.
Salt, Mr., ii. 477.
Samaria, Jesus visits, i. 177. 276. Christian religion received in, 416. ii. 96. Samaritan, the good, i. 279. n. 294. Samaritan belief in a Messiah, 181, 182. Samaritan woman, the, 179. Samaritan Sanhedrin, 183. Samaritan letters, the celebrated, 181. n. Samaritan poems, curious, 181. n. Samaritan Chronicle, the Liber Josuæ, 182. n. Samaritans and Jews hostile, 177. 183. 419. The former defile the Temple at Jerusalem, 177. Governed, under the Roman supremacy, by a Sanhedrin, 183. ii. 156. n.
Sanchoniathon, ii. 83.
Sanctus, suffers martyrdom at Vienne, ii. 195.

Sanhedrin, the, i. 137. 154. 157. n. 168. 171. 221. 262, *et seq.* 290. Their persecution of Jesus, 272. 303. 335. Question of this tribunal being competent to condemn Jesus to death, 339. Its relation to the executive government, 340. The Rulers charge Jesus with blasphemy, 354. And press Pilate to prove himself a friend to Tiberius Cæsar by condemning the King of the Jews, 356. Conduct, and affairs, of this religious Council subsequent to the Resurrection of Christ, 382. 384. 390. 397. 435. Revolution in the, 392. They re-assert their power over life and death, 441. Flight of, and establishment at Tiberias, 444. Of the Samaritans, 183.
Sapores, reign of, ii. 327.
Sardica, Council of, iii. 15. 42.
Sasima, Gregory, Bishop of, iii. 199.
Satan, exorcisms addressed to, i. 235. n. ii. 113.
Saturninus of Antioch, ii. 108. A Gnostic disciple of Simon Magus and Menander, 112.
Saul [St. Paul], a disciple of Gamaliel the Pharisee, i. 394. His miraculous conversion, on the road to Damascus, 403. See St. Paul.
Savigny, M. de, opinions of, or citations from, i. 107. n.
Scaliger, biblical criticisms of, i. 442. n.
Sceva, sons of the High Priest, i. 431. ii. 27.
Schlegel, A. W., observations of, i. 14. n.
Scipio, maxim of, ii. 157.
Scribes, the, i. 190. 315. 442. n.
Scripture, authority of, appealed to by Jesus, i. 167. Jesus familiar with, and constantly alluding to, 191. In Gothic, the version of Ulphilas, iii. 136. Version of, by Jerome, 288. 336.
Sculpture, art of, subservient to heathen superstition, i. 26. ii. 2. 103. n. 153. 405. As connected with the Church, iii. 493.
Scythians, rude worship and deities of the, ii. 311. 321.
Seasons, the, ceremonies dependent on, i. 13.
Seleucia, city of, i. 63. n. ii. 180.
Seneca, i. 29. n. 36. ii. 8. 38. 92. The correspondence, of, with St. Paul, a forgery, 23. n.
Septuagint, Greek text interpolated, i. 33. n. 71.
Sepulchre, the Holy, i. 366, *et seq.* The women at the, 376. Temple of Aphrodite, over, ii. 417. Christian Church of the, 419.
Serapis, worship of, i. 7. 41. ii. 7. n. 169. 208. iii. 124. The Serapeum, or Temple of, destroyed by Theodosius, ii. 168. iii. 150, *et seq.*
Sergius Paulus, his admiration of the doctrine of Paul and Barnabas, i. 421, 422. ii. 8.
Sermon on the Mount, Christ's, i. 192. n. 201. 227.
Sermons of the Fathers, iii. 484. Of the Christian divines, 475. 479.
Serpent, the Old, ii. 110. The Ophites, or worshippers of the, 131. Ophis, considered as Satan, 132. And by some as Christ, 132.
Seventy, the disciples, commissioned by Jesus, i. 278.
Severus, reign of, ii. 205. His visit to, and persecutions in, Egypt, 207, 208.
———, Alexander, the Emperor, ii. 201. 230, *et seq.*
Shah-poor, or Sapores, reign of, ii. 327.
Shechinah, notion of a visible, i. 22.
Shibboleth, the, i. 183.
Shiloh, coming of the, i. 57.
Shrines, silver, of Ephesus, ii. 24. 29.
Sibylline Books, the, ii. 165, 166. n. 167. 169. 171. n. 255. 349.
Sichem, well of, the Samaritan woman at the, i. 178. This city named Sichar by the Jews, 178.
Sicily, temples in, to the Mother of the Gods, iii. 182.
Sidon, city of, i. 250.
Siloah, fountain and brook of, i. 264.
Silas accompanies Paul into Syria, &c., i. 428. 431. n. ii. 10.
Simeon, Song of, i. 102. n. 109. iii. 301. n. His benediction of Jesus, i. 110.
———, father of Gamaliel, i. 109, 110.
———, bishop of Jerusalem, ii. 150.
Simon the Cyrenian, ii. 118.

Simon the Canaanite, an Apostle, i. 227.
——— Magus, legend of, i. 120. 416. Doctrines of, replete with Orientalism, 182. ii. 80. 96. His real character and tenets, 98. The 'Helena' beautiful, 99. Probability of the history of, 100.
———, known by the name of Cephas, is named Peter, or the Rock, by Jesus, i. 149. 225. See St. Peter.
Simonides, the philosopher, iii. 121.
Sin, doctrines relative to, ii. 104. 336. 396.
——, original, iii. 268.
Singing, Church, iii. 521. Antiphonal chaunting, 522, 523. Introduced into the West by Ambrose, 523.
Sins, forgiveness of, i. 209. 363.
Sion, the Holy City, i. 78.
——, Mount, the fortress on, i. 318.
Sirmium, Temple of the Sun at, ii. 255. Formulary of, on consubstantialism, iii. 42. Synod at, 45.
Slavery, effects of Christianity on this great question, iii. 343.
Slaves, sale of infants for, ii. 469, 470. Laws relating to, 470. Death of a slave by torture, punishable, 470. Christian captives converted the Goths, iii. 136.
Smith, Dr. Pye, on the Messiah, i. 83.
Smyrna, Church of, ii. 184. Earthquake at, 189.
Socrates, philosophy of, ii. 17. His declaration of one Supreme Being, 20.
———, ecclesiastical historian, ii. 345. n. 441. n. iii. 43.
Solomon, Temple of, i. 24. Book of Wisdom, 80. Porch of Solomon, in the later Temple, i. 280. Song of, iii. 329. n.
Soothsayers, i. 12. ii. 359. iii. 181.
Sopater, the philosopher, ii. 455. Constantine friendly to, 455. Is beheaded, 456.
Sophists, philosophy of the, ii. 21. n.
Sophronia, suicide of the virtuous, ii. 348.
Sosthenes, the Jew, ii. 23.
Soul, the immortality of the, i. 33. 36. 40. 45. 98. 371, *et seq.* ii. 177. iii. 264. 423. Freedom of the human, 268.
Soul, imprisoned in matter, ii. 99. Transmigration of, 99. 118. Doctrine of its union with the Deity, 104.
South Sea Islanders, by whom converted, i. 49. n.
Sozomen, historian, ii. 393. n. 396. n. 435. n.
Spain, iii. 142. The Roman dominion in, ii. 181. The Spanish bishops pursue Priscillian for heresy, iii. 142. 261.
Spectacles, Public, iii. 416.
———, Profane, iii. 441. *et passim.* Four kinds of, 447.
Spirit, the Universal, the Creator, i. 319.
———, the Holy, i. 151. 330. 385. 417. ii. 427. iii. 268.
Spirits, Mani's doctrine relative to, ii. 332. 333. *et passim.*
———, evil, exorcised, i. 89. 223. 234. 238. See Angels.
St. Croix, M. de, History by, i. 61. ii. 152. n.
Star in the East, the, i. 111.
Stephen, St., proto-martyr, i. 397. Important influence of his constancy, 400. 402.
Stephen, bishop of Antioch, iii. 18.
Stilpo, exile of, ii. 20.
Stoic philosophy, the, i. 35. ii. 19. The Stoic philosophers of Rome, 54. 177.
Stolberg, Count, arguments of, i. 452. n.
Stoning to death, a Jewish punishment, i. 397. 441.
Stowell, William Lord, i. 9. n.
Strabo, his apology respecting mythological allusions, i. 37. Quotations from, 194. n. 402. n.
Strauss, Dr., opinions, &c., of, i. 93. n. 102. n. 105. n. 115—123. 245. n.
Suetonius, the historian, i. 57. 430. ii. 60.
Sun and Earth, i. 12.
Sun, Festivals of the, i. 13. n. Worship of, 64. ii. 225. 407. iii. 67. n. 70. Worship of, at Rome, ii. 227. 267. At Sirmium, 255. Christ's dwelling in the sun, according to Mani, 324. 335.
Sunday, sanctity of the, ii. 358. Laws relating to, 468. iii. 443.

Supper, the Last, partaking of the Body and Blood of the Redeemer, i. 329, *et seq.* ii. 77. 335. iii. 428.
Swine, Legion dismissed into the herd of, i. 238.
Symbolism, belonging to the Church, iii. 498.
Symmachus, his oration to Theodosius, i. 29. n. His Apology, iii. 169. Replied to by Ambrose, 171. His fresh instances for the restoration of the statue of Victory, 178. His contest with Ambrose farther alluded to, 251. On the Amphitheatre, 456.
Symphorian, St., Acts of, ii. 176. n.
Synagogue, the, i. 82. 424. 426. n. 430. 448. ii. 2. 25. 65. 67 At Corinth, 22.
Synesius, Acts of, iii. 405, 406.
Syria, a Roman province, i. 137. 406. Christian converts throughout, 411. 428. Jewish population of, 421. Religion of, antecedent to Christianity, 64. 427. Syrian Greeks, 195. Syrian Christians, ii. 230. Syrian Goddess worshipped, i. 427. n. ii. 227. Hymns of the Syrian Christians, 123. Church of, 435. 449. Persecutions in, 207. iii. 87. Temples destroyed, 148. Monks, 296.
Syrianus, the Duke, his conduct at Alexandria in Egypt, iii. 26.
Syro-Phœnician woman's daughter, i. 250.

Tabernacle, the, i. 157.
Tabernacles, Feast of the, i. 257. 260.
Tabor, Mount, the Transfiguration on, i. 257.
Tacitus speaks of the astrologers, i. 44. Of Judæa, 57. 147. Of the Jews and Christians, ii. 35. n. 37. n. 38. n. 50. n. 53.
Talismans, amulets, and spells, ii. 24—28.
Talmud, the Babylonian, i. 63. Jewish traditions in the, 120. The Jewish Talmud, 146. n. 147. n. 179. 329. n. ii. 66. iii. 365. Compendium of the, by Pinner, i. 193.
Targum, the, or Comments on Scripture, i. 60.
Tarsus, the city of, i. 401, 402. n.
Tartars, the, ii. 311. 315.
Telemachus, the monk, his death in the Amphitheatre, iii. 458.
Temple, the, of Solomon, i. 24. 157. The later Temple, 62. 154. 177. 248. 299. 387. 397. 408. The Holy of Holies, 90. 449. 458. The Temple become a mart, 165. Jesus drives out the traders, 167. 308. The Treasury of the, 166. n. 266. 316. 345. Jesus's declaration of raising the Temple again in three days, figurative, 169. He teaches in the, 261. 311. Its Porticoes described, 280. Christ heals the sick in, 305. The Court of the Gentiles, 305. 433. The Court of Israel, 306. Lament of Christ over this magnificent edifice, 317. 320. Necessity of its destruction, 319. The Inner Court, 357. n. Primitive Christians still resorted to the Temple, 424. 426. n. 442. n. The Gazith, chamber of assembly of the Sanhedrin, 435. Its destruction by Vespasian's army, 444. The Temple service, ii. 1. 67. The ancient Temple tax, levied by Vspasian for the restoration of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, 55. The Emperor Julian attempts to rebuild it, iii. 98, *et seq.*
Temples, Heathen, destroyed by Xerxes, i. 5. n. Destroyed by Marcellus in Sicily, 6. n. Of ancient Rome, 6. 20. On Mount Moriah, 458. Considered as desecrated by the Christian office, ii. 2. Converted into Christian churches, 2. The celebrated fane of Ephesus, 6. n. 24. 29. 103. Of the Sun at Sirmium, 255. Those built by the successors of Alexander, 311. Of Apollo, 344. n. Of Byzantium, 402. n. Of Constantinople, 411. Not suited for the Christian office, 411. Spoliation of, recommended, iii. 87. Restoration of, by Julian, 88. Destruction of, by Theodosius, 143. 145, *et seq.* 150, *et seq.* Alienation of the revenues of, 147. Some temples converted to the Christian worship, 149.
Tempter, the, i. 15.
Temptation, the, of our Lord, i. 152,

et seq. Various theories respecting, 153.
Terminus, the god, i. 19.
Tertullian, citations from, i. 430. n. 460. ii. 45. n. 63. n. 129. n. 162. n. 163. n. 207. n. iii. 363. n. 420. n. 437. 493. His Apology for Christianity, ii. 154. 157. 165. 215. 264. n. Character of his writings, 212.
Testament, New :— The Gospels, i. 51. 53. 60. 95. 152. iii. 134. 266. 499. Hellenistic style of, 463. See Appendices to Vol. I. chap. ii. pp. 115—132. (Many of the important references to the Testament:) —St. Matthew, i. 53. 111. n. 122. 154. 201. 459. St. Mark, 53. 122. 383. n. St. Luke, 53. 105. n. 154. 201. 248. 279. n. 421. n. St. John, 54. 163. n. 167. n. 279. n. ii. 103. Acts, the, i. 390. 392. 395. n. 409. 418. n. 421. 431. 439. 441. 452. ii. 7. 9. 34. n. 41. 96. St. Peter, i. 63. n. St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, 405. n. 451. To the Thessalonians, 431. n. To the Romans, 450, 451. 453. ii. 31. iii. 137. To the Corinthians, ii. 3. 71. n. iii. 357. To the Hebrews, ii. 39. n. To Timothy, 34. 41. n. 42.
Teutonic nations, the, iii. 137.
——— usages, iii. 135.
Thaddeus, the Apostle, named Judas also, i. 226.
Theatres of the ancients exhibited religious spectacles, ii. 6. n. The Amphitheatre, and contests of gladiators, and wild beasts, 7. n. 38.
Theatrical exhibitions and amusements, ii. 145.
Theism, ancient doctrines of, i. 22. 41. 62. 65. 427. *et passim.*
Themistius, speaks of the toleration of Jovian, iii. 110. 141. 180. n.
Theodore of Mopsuestia, i. 153. n.
Theodoret, quoted, iii. 108. n. *et passim.*
Theodorus, St., heroic acts of, depicted, iii. 515.
Theodosius, the Emperor, ii. 168. iii. 140. Of Spanish origin, 142. A Christian, 142. Hostile to Paganism, 143. Rescript of, to the Alexandrians, 155. Edict of, 174. His victory over Eugenius, 176. His death, 177. His orthodoxy, and laws against heretics, 185. Edict of Constantinople against the Arians, 203. His anger excited against Antioch, 211. He degrades the episcopal see, to a dependency on Laodicea, 214. He finally forgives the Antiochians for having insulted his statue, 217. Affair of St. Ambrose, 255. The emperor orders a massacre at Thessalonica, 258. His absolution by St. Ambrose, after severe reproof, 260. His death, 262. The Theodosian code, 342. 443.
Theognis, bishop of Nice, ii. 446.
Theogonism of the East, ii. 104.
Theology, iii. 264, *et seq.* 527.
Theophilosophic systems prevalent in the Roman empire, ii. 230.
Theophilus, archbishop of Alexandria, iii. 153, *et seq.* 188, *et seq.* 227—231.
Theoretica, the, iii. 443.
Theotecnus of Antioch, ii. 298.
Therapeutæ, the, or Contemplatists, i. 162. ii. 8.
Thessalonica, Jews, and synagogue of, i. 429. St. Paul expelled by Jason from, ii. 14. Massacre at by order of Theodosius, 258.
Theudas, insurrection of, i. 394. 419.
Theurgy, magic included in, ii. 231. 237. 463. iii. 91.
Thibet, Schaka of, i. 99. n. The Lama of, ii. 86.
Thirlwall, Mr., i. 124.
Tholuk, M., opinions of, i. 105. n. 107. n.
Thomas, St., or Didymus, character of the Apostle, i. 226.
Thrasea, Roman patriot, in the reign of Vespasian, ii. 55. 92.
Thyatira, Christians of, i. 12.
Tiberias, sea of, i. 111. n. City of, 163. 195. The Sanhedrin flies to, 444. Jewish patriarch of, 460.
Tiberius, edict of, i. 27. n. He banishes astrologers, 43. Christ crucified by his præfect Pontius Pilate, 357. Gladiatorial shows, ii. 38.
——— Alexander, procurator of Judæa, i. 419.
Tillemont, M., observations of, ii. 232. n.

Time without bounds, i. 66.
Timothy, circumcision of, i. 428. Attends St. Paul in his Evangelical labours, 431. n. ii. 9. n. 10. The Epistle to, 34. n. 41. n. 42.
Tiridates, king of Armenia, ii. 320, 321. His conversion by the Apostle Gregory, 322. War with Maximin, 322.
Titus, bold resistance of the Jews against, i. 147. n. 374. Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by, 444.
——, deacon of the Cretan Church, ii. 41.
Tobit, apocryphal Book of, i. 70.
Tongues, the gift of, for preaching the Gospel, i. 387.
Townson, Dr., argument of, i. 179.
Trachonitis, the, i. 111. n.
Tradition, the Jewish, i. 59. 64. 120. 179. 190. 214. 257. 339.
—— of the Christians having been forewarned of the Fall of Jerusalem, i. 444.
Traditionists and Antitraditionists, Jewish sects of, i. 311.
Traditions, the Rabbinical, i. 444.
Traditors, the, ii. 367.
Tragedy, iii. 448.
Trajan, the Emperor, ii. 49. 53. 59. 136. 139. His reply to Pliny on the subject of the Christians, 141, 142. n. 143. n. His Eastern wars, 149.
Transmigration of souls, ii. 99. 118.
Tribute of Palestine and Syria to Cæsar, i. 137. 139. 312. The Roman coin shown to Jesus, when he declares it should be rendered unto Cæsar, 313.
Trinitarians, the Manicheans were, ii. 331. Their controversy with the Donatists, 364—375. 422. Effects of the Trinitarian controversy in the West, iii. 13. 139.
Trinity, various notions of the, ii. 325. Distinction of the Persons of the, 429. Doctrine of the, 430. iii. 42. n. Triumph of, 185. The more powerful ecclesiastical writers maintain it, 186.
Troas, St. Paul in, ii. 41.
Trophimus, the Ephesian, i. 433.
Tsabaism, or Star worship, i. 12. ii. 125. 311.
Turcomans, the, ii. 311. 315.
Turks, the, i. 429. n.
Twelve Tables, Laws of the, ii. 359.
Tyre, city of, i. 250. ii. 31. 292. Its church rebuilt, 298. Synod of, 453.

Ulphilas, his version of the Scriptures into Gothic, iii. 136. n.
Unknown God, the, ii. 17, 18. n.
Unity, the Divine, i. 21. 45. 296. 416, 417. n. ii. 35. 82. iii. 264.
Ursacius, bishop of Singidunum, iii. 15. 17, 18.

Valckenaer de Aristobulo Judæo, ii. 166. n.
Valens, the Emperor, reign of, iii. 109, *et seq.* Men of learning or philosophical pursuits prosecuted for inquiring the probable name of his successor, 120, *et seq.* Is baptized, 124. Crimes alleged against this emperor, 125. Interview of, with St. Basil, 125. His progress through Asia, 125. His death, 140.
——, bishop of Mursa, iii. 15. 17, 18.
Valentinian, reign of, iii. 109, *et seq.* His toleration, 111. His laws, 112. 380. His cruelty, 114.
—— II., the Emperor, iii. 139. 163. 168. Is murdered, 173. Conjoint edict, 185. 247. He yields to St. Ambrose, who had refused the use of a church to Justina, 249. Anecdote of the emperor, 250. n. His death, 262.
Valentinus, the Gnostic sectarian, ii. 118.
Valeria, wife of Galerius, ii. 260. 277. 294.
Valerian, the Emperor, persecution by, ii. 245, *et seq.* His cruel death, 254.
Vandals, the, embrace Christianity, iii. 138.
Varro, i. 36. n.
Venus Aphrodite, ii. 417. 419.
—— Urania, ii. 227.
—— Verticordia, i. 20.
Verona, battle of, ii. 349.
Verus, Lucius, the Emperor, ii. 124. 179. His victories in Mesopotamia, &c., 180.
Vespasian, the Emperor, his vigour

of character, i. 44. 60. 83. ii. 54. The Flavian dynasty, ii. 49. 53.
Vestal Virgins of Rome, abolished, iii. 167. 171. 178.
Vettius Epagathus, ii. 194.
Victory, statue of, at Rome, dragged from its pedestal and altar, by Gratian, iii. 166. The altar restored by Eugenius, 173. 178.
Vienne, the Martyrs of, ii. 193, *et seq.* Church of, 213. n.
Vigilantius, iii. 332. Jerome's language to, 335.
Vineyard, parable of the Lord of the, i. 310.
Virgil an Epicurean, i. 42. His eclogue 'Pollio,' ii. 166. n.
Virgin Mary, the, i. 94—103. 163. 236. 363. Mystical or Gnostic notion of the, ii. 123. Her shrines, iii. 182. Worship of, 544. Paintings of, 544—548.
Visigoths, the, iii. 138. n.
Vitellius, præfect of Syria, i. 406.
Vitringa, opinions of, ii. 67. n.

Warburton, Bishop, on the Mysteries, i. 31. n.
Weisse, Dr., die Evangelische Geschichte, &c., i. 121. 124. n. 372.
West, uninterrupted and gradual progress of the Christian faith in the, ii. 80, *et seq.* 207. 343. The great prelates of the, iii. 241. Ambrose, 243. Augustin, 263. Jerome, 285. Antony, 297. Orientalism disseminated in the, ii. 119. The Western Churches, 213. 389. iii. 13.
Wetstein's character of King Herod, i. 282. n.
Whateley, Archbishop, argument of, i. 9. n. On 'Rhetoric,' ii. 6. n.
Whitby, opinions of, i. 103. n.
Widow's mite, the, i. 316.
———— son, raised from death by Jesus, i. 229.
Wild beasts, conflicts of men with, in the Amphitheatre, iii. 459.
Wilderness, ascetics inhabiting a, ii. 93.
Wills, law of, iii. 400.
Windischman, 'Philosophie,' &c., of, ii. 83. n.
Wine, miraculous, of Cana of Galilee, i. 161, 162. Abstinence from, i. 442. n.
Wisdom, and Moral Perfection, ii. 84. 99. 116.
Wisdom of Solomon, Book of the, i. 80.
Wisdom, or Sophia, ii. 120. 125. Encounters Horus, 121. The title of Sophia Achamoth, 126.
Witchcraft, a vulgar superstition, i. 42. ii. 25. iii. 91. 183.
Word, the, ὁ Λογος, i. 74. 81. ii. 99. 104. 120.
Wordsworth, Mr., poems of, quoted, i. 101. n.
World, ancient physical theories of the, i. 13. The belief in the approaching end of the, 453. Idea of its destruction by fire, ii. 19. 37. 334. The material, 106. 113.

Xenophon, Cyropædia of, i. 50.
Xerxes destroys the temples of Babylon and of Greece, i. 5. n.

Zaccheus, desirous to see Jesus pass, i. 289. Jesus visits his house, 289.
Zachariah, vision of, i. 89. 91. 149. Prophecy of, 303.
Zakinim, or Jewish Elders, ii. 66.
Zealots, doctrines of the, i. 139. 227. 441. n.
Zendavesta, the, i. 67. 115. ii. 313. Its Liturgies and Institutes, i. 68. The Amaschaspands, or angels, of, 70, *et passim.*
Zeno, ii. 17.
Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, ii. 255.
Zodiac, signs of the, ii. 125. 334.
Zoroaster, doctrine of, i. 66, 67. n. 76. 78. n. 111. ii. 92. 113. 115. 130. Revival of the religion of, 81. 310. 312.
Zosimus, the historian, ii. 393. n. 395, 396. n. 405. n.

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